

HELLAS

THE FORERUNNER

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VOLUME ONE
ATHENS IN HER GLORY

J. M. DENT & SONS LTD.
LONDON AND TORONTO

- FIRST PUBLISHED 1927
REPRINTED 1927, 1928 (twice), 1929

PREFACE

I HAVE often thought that history, for all but the scholar, is overloaded with facts that have little significance, and that for all purposes but those of an examiner (whose melancholy fate it is to do so much harm to education) are irrelevant. The student is so much occupied in learning facts that he cannot wander aside from his narrow path to survey the prospect, and interpret it as a whole. He cannot see the wood for the trees.

If this is true of history in general, it is true of Greek history in a peculiar degree. On a classical "side" its main function is antiquarian—to make intelligible the allusions in Greek texts. And the Greek texts are still read very generally as exercises in the study of language, rather than for their content. Probably eight boys out of every ten who read them, or rather patches of a few of them, never think of them, or of Greek history, again after they drop them with a sigh of relief on leaving school. So just when both would begin to have a meaning they are cast aside, and the books, so modern in their point of view, so full of interest, so suggestive, are never read as books at all. The difficulty of the letter has obscured the spirit.

And the boy and girl who do not learn Greek commonly know nothing at all of that most brilliant period in the history of the human race. They are quite unconscious that the mind of man reached a higher peak of achievement, more than two thousand years ago, than it was ever to reach again until the days of their fathers and grandfathers. Education has been

v

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an amassing of facts: there is little thinking about them. But the Greek told us that much knowledge does not necessarily teach understanding, and that much thought rather than much knowledge should be our aim.

Our narrow course of history leads to conceit, and lets imagination atrophy. History should be philosophy teaching by examples; but the examples are so poorly chosen that philosophy can only stand aside. We become doubly insular, interpreting the world through the little peephole of our own experience. You cannot know yourself or others until imagination has been set to work; and an imperial people must have a surer understanding of human nature, in all its diversity of circumstance, than we have to-day. Greek history, foreign history, books of travel, all foster the imagination and broaden the mind: yet in English education we commonly neglect them all.

We are in some danger of supposing that the twentieth century is the heir of all the ages; that men really never have thought and done what it has thought and done; that its achievements at last have about them a measure of permanence that man's achievements have never known before; and that such a deluge as swept away the Cretan and Greco-Roman civilisations never can recur. But man's progress, material and intellectual, has its tides like the ocean. There is flow and ebb. The nineteenth century saw the tide of material progress at flood—at flood as it reaches up some unsightly estuary, all the clean vigour of its ocean source besmirched. The twentieth century has, perhaps, already seen the turn. Another war, a prolonged period of industrial strife, a wilful spending of what we do not earn, and it will run sharply down; and Western Europe will look back with a sigh to a vanished magnificence that it will never know again.

As a people we are lacking in respect for thought, for knowledge, and for the hard work that they demand. A man who has studied one thing closely, and given real thought to it, if it be but a hobby, will be more apt to realise what thought and knowledge mean on a wider scale, and what they cost in time and effort.

This book has been written out of a wish to make it possible for all students, boys, girls or adults, whatever their course of education, to know something of Greek history, and something of the great figures that give it, in thought and action, its everlasting interest and significance. So far as space allows, the Greek historians tell their own tale, and Greek poets shed their light upon the period. Reference has been made freely to modern experience and modern poetry, in order to bridge the gulf of two millennia—to throw into relief the intensely modern spirit of the Greek, and the living interest of the problems which occupied him as thinker, administrator, politician.

I am one of those who think that the education of many boys is largely spoilt by over-insistence upon the value of a linguistic training through the classics, and by an unpardonable neglect of our own language. Yet I would have them know much more, and think much more, of Greece and Rome than they do now. The many beautiful translations of the classics which are now to be had at a modest cost make access to them easy. If too, here and there, a boy or girl, of the necessary ability and the right type of mind, should be stirred to master the "god-grand language," and read the Greek itself for its own sake, I should be happy.

The selection of matter has been arbitrary. That much should be omitted was inevitable. The gaps are obvious. If what has been included provokes thought, and a wish to read more widely, I shall be content, for I shall have done what I wanted to do.

The spelling of Greek names has involved as usual a difficult choice. Consistency has not been attempted. It has seemed better on the whole to use the Greek "k" than the ambiguous English "c," and "ei" than the English "i" of doubtful quantity, except where familiar custom would make their use pedantic.

The debt which I owe to the modern writers who are throwing a new light upon Greek history is obvious, and will, I hope, be found to have been acknowledged in text and notes. In particular I owe my most grateful acknowledgments to Mr. A. S. Way, who has kindly allowed me to use freely his translation of the Persæ of Æschylus; to the editors of the Loeb Classical Library and Mr. William Heinemann, for giving their kind permission to my very extensive use of the translations of the Odyssey by Mr. A. T. Murray, of Hesiod by Mr. H. G. Evelyn-White, and of Herodotus, Books I.-VII., by Mr. A. D. Godley; to Messrs. George Allen and Unwin for allowing me to quote very freely from Professor Gilbert Murray's beautiful translations of many of the plays of Euripides, and from his version of *The Frogs* of Aristophanes; to Messrs. George Bell and Sons for kindly permitting me to use long passages from Dr. Rogers's translations of Aristophanes; and to the Oxford University Press for permission to quote passages from Professor Gilbert Murray's *Rise of the Greek Epic* and from Professor A. E. Zimmern's *Greek Commonwealth*.

For Plutarch's *Lives* I have used Clough's translation in Everyman's Library (J. M. Dent & Sons), and for Thucydides generally Crawley's translation in the Temple Classics (J. M. Dent & Sons).

1927.

H. W. H.

CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
PREFACE	v
I. CRETE, THE FORERUNNER OF GREECE	1
II. THE MIGRATIONS	17
III. THE IONIANS	34
IV. THE BEGINNINGS OF CITY LIFE IN GREECE	48
V. THE TYRANTS	65
VI. THE COMING OF THE PERSIAN	88
VII. THE IONIAN REVOLT	100
VIII. MARATHON	108
IX. AFTER MARATHON	119
X. THERMOPYLÆ	137
XI. SALAMIS	147
XII. PLATÆA AND MYKALÈ	160
XIII. THE GROWTH OF THE ATHENIAN EMPIRE	172
XIV. SUPREMACY OR DOWNFALL?	191
INDEX	213

HELLAS THE FORERUNNER

CHAPTER I

CRETE, THE FORERUNNER OF GREECE

ABOUT 1400 B.C., more than three thousand years ago, a wealthy and highly civilised island empire was nearing its end. Doubtless it did not know it, though here and there perhaps wiseheads were anxious about the future, for times were changing. The cloud that foretold the coming tempest was no bigger than a man's hand, but it lay there dark and ominous on the horizon. Fierce hardy strangers, with new and terrible weapons in their hands, had appeared upon the mainland that would one day be Greece. They had even taken to the sea, and were playing the pirate in the Ægean among the peaceful trading ships of Crete.

Till their coming a great peace had blessed Crete and the islands. It had lasted, it would seem, for close upon two thousand years; such a peace, so long and so profound, as neither Crete nor any other part of Europe was to enjoy again. Upon the sea until towards the end the Cretans knew no rivals. They feared no enemies, and therefore made none; for they grasped at no lands of others, but lived in the peaceful way of industry and commerce by buying and selling, by farming and fishing and manufacture, and by fetching and carrying for the islands and coasts of

the Ægean northwards, and for Egypt to the south. There were good laws and just judges, and strong kings, who enforced obedience to them. Men's lives and property were safe. It was a veritable age of gold, in which the Greek mainland shared, for it lay aloof from the usual pathways of invasion, the nearest of which, crossing the Dardanelles, carried the migrating Northerners, who were always seeking a place in sunnier lands, well to the east of it into Asia Minor.

To those far-off happy days later generations, whose lives and property were never safe, looked back with longing and infinite regret. Altogether blessed in their eyes were the folk who lived in them.

They lived like gods without sorrow of heart, remote and free from toil and grief: miserable age rested not on them; but with legs and arms never failing they made merry with feasting beyond the reach of all evils. When they died it was as though they were overcome with sleep, and they had all good things; for the fruitful earth unforced bare them fruit abundantly and without stint. They dwelt in ease and peace upon their lands with many good things, rich in flocks and loved by the blessed gods.

HESIOD, *Works and Days*, 112-20 (Evelyn-White).

Such was Hesiod's picture of the Golden Age. He lived about the middle of the ninth century B.C., in very different days, when, as we shall see, raid after raid, invasion after invasion, had shattered the civilisation of the Greek mainland, and there remained of the magnificence of Crete but a vague memory, a myth, a tale wonderful beyond belief, told by the lips of men of another speech—the Greeks. For three thousand years no man could say how much of truth, or, indeed, whether any truth, lay hidden in the myth. Then, at last, in A.D. 1900, the spade of the archaeologist uncovered the site of the ancient city of Knossus, and showed that what had passed so long for fable was, in the main, but fact.

Crete, a land of corn and wine and olive oil, is part of a sunken mountain chain whose many peaks thrust themselves as islands above the waters of the Ægean. From east to west there runs through it a mountain backbone, and at right angles to that backbone, at intervals, steep valleys run down to the sea. As in Greece, the town with its coast plain at the mouth of one valley is cut off from the towns of the adjoining valleys by the difficulty of the mountain paths, and communication was always easier by sea than by land. So the sea always called to Greek and Cretan. It was their highway; and in its fisheries it opened to them an abounding source of wealth.

Up one of these valleys, three and a half miles from Candia, the modern capital, lie the ruins of Knossus, the great palace where lived the sovereigns who for so many centuries were the lords and masters (so far as it had masters) of the Ægean. It stood upon a knoll that rose steeply above the river at the valley bottom, and commanded a lovely view towards the sea, where at the river mouth lay the little seaport and the ships. Covering a site of five acres, it was more town than palace. Such palace cities may be found in India to-day. Five stories high it rose where the builders had cut into the hillside. But around this, spreading in all directions, wandered a city that must have had a population of more than a hundred thousand—vast indeed for those far-off days. In the palace were stately halls, approached by long corridors and splendid staircases. The Great Staircase of five flights, used, no doubt, on state occasions, measured nearly fifteen yards from side to side. Rome itself eighteen hundred years later could boast nothing like it: its most famous steps were little more than a third of the width of this. Of the corridors the longest was two hundred feet in length, and along one side of it were twenty store-

rooms, which, when uncovered, were "still full of tall jars, large and numerous enough to hide the Forty Thieves"—[Hawes, *Crete, the Forerunner of Greece*]. Where the light was good, artists of rare skill had beautified the walls with lifelike pictures. For the dark hours there were tall standard lamps of marble, some of which seem to have held four wicks. Water was abundant, and was controlled with scientific skill, ingenious automatic devices governing its flow. There were fountains and bathrooms and lavatories; and there were drain-pipes and a sewer, sure signs of civilisation and culture. The sewer, three feet high and nearly two feet broad, was coated with cement, and had its man-trap for inspection. The like of it was not seen again in Europe until the nineteenth century.

Within the palace area were private houses for great persons, and ministers of state, and quarters for a little army of clerks and craftsmen. A schoolroom too has been found, with stone benches round the walls, and two bowls "hollowed in low pillars, one the height for a man and the other for a child, for keeping moist the clay lumps out of which were moulded the tablets,"—[Hawes], which served for paper and for books. Unfortunately the tablets, which have been found in large quantities, tell us as yet very little because, although a number of the letters used "are practically identical with forms of the later Greek alphabet," the key to the language has still to be discovered.

"The general effect of the huge rambling building," we are told, "must have been that of a crowded village rather than a single residence. Private houses . . . crowded one another along narrow tortuous alleys on uneven ground, more stair than street."

Unlike the cities of the Greek mainland, unlike Troy and Babylon, and the cities of Syria, this great Palace-city to the last was entirely unfortified. If its

ships controlled the sea, it was safe; if they were beaten, no walls could save it.

At the entrances to the Palace were porters' lodges and guard-rooms and sentry-boxes; for in such a hive of industry it was well to know who went in and who went out. In later days, when the long peace had ended, there were those within, prisoners and hostages, some of them perhaps from Athens, who would fain have escaped, if they could but have found their way through the many dark and twisting passages, in which a stranger would quickly lose himself without a guide.

Everywhere upon walls and pillars there still meets the eye the figure of a double-axe, sometimes carved, sometimes moulded, which was the symbol of the Sky-God, who showed his power in the thunder and the rainstorm that smote the earth in springtime, and made her yield her fruits for the food of man. And there was another symbol of no less sanctity and power, that was to be seen on every altar, the head and horns of a great bull.

This Palace-city was known as Labyrinthus, the Place of the Labrys, or Double-Axe; and by that name the winding mazy passages became famous all over the ancient world. In other countries men made like passages for a show in their gardens and public places. But, when the city had been destroyed and forgotten, the fact that the first labyrinth was a famous palace was forgotten too, and myth took hold of labyrinth and bull and king, and made of them, as we shall see, a wondrous tale.

Crete and the archipelago and the Greek mainland were inhabited then by people who belonged to the old Mediterranean race, of which the Egyptians also were a branch. The modern Berbers of North Africa are descended from it, and, in spite of all the foreign blood that has mixed since then with theirs, they still recall

the old race in form and feature. Members of that race had pushed their way before 2000 B.C. through Spain and France to England and even to Ireland. Like the Egyptians and the Cretans they too were famous builders, though in a ruder fashion. Wherever they went they left their great stone (megalithic) monuments to mark their path. Stonehenge and Avebury were the work of their hands, not long, perhaps, after 2000 B.C. In Ireland they have even left traces of their way of speech. When the Celtic tribes, who were the ancestors of the Welsh and Irish, invaded these islands, they, no doubt, killed most of the men whom they found here, and married the women.¹ That was the way of the conquering races that with their hard iron weapons were then forcing their way down from the North, and seizing the lands of the older peoples who lay across their path. The women had to learn the speech of their new masters, and they spoke it like foreigners—spoke a broken "Irish" that was full of forms of expression that belonged to their native language. Their children picked up from them these tricks of speech, of which a number still remain in the language to-day, showing plainly that it was once spoken imperfectly by people whose original tongue was akin to ancient Egyptian and modern Berber. These members of the Mediterranean race, however, never reached the pitch of civilisation that was reached by the Egyptians and the Cretans, and the folk of the Ægean Sea.

The Cretans from very early times had made the voyage to Egypt. Before 3500 B.C. they had been there, for an Egyptian bowl of earlier date has been found at Knossus. In the early days of the sixteenth century B.C. the connection between the two countries was close and friendly. Cretans appear in the Egyptian

¹ See p. 20 below.

wall-paintings of the period, carrying the beautiful vases for which their craftsmen were famous. "Princes of the Isles in the midst of the Great Green Sea" the Egyptians called them, or "the Keftiu,"¹ which was the national name by which they knew them. All that time the whole of the sea-borne trade of the Ægean was under their control. Sponges they carried, and dried fish, oil and raisins, wine and olives, and the famous decorated pottery. They even carried toy vases, and little kettles on three legs, made by their potters (so it is thought) for the games of children, who played then as now at keeping house. Such merchandise speaks of peace and prosperous homes and happy days. Men would carry no toys for children in the days that were coming. Then children themselves would be carried as merchandise, and a prince, as we shall see, might find himself a slave and a swine-herd.

Very clever were the Cretan craftsmen, taught by two thousand years of peace and the uninterrupted study and practice of their crafts. In after days Greek legend told of one Dædalus, who made a flying machine, which, when flying over the sea, crashed like so many since, and killed his son. So many of the myths of Crete have been found to contain a kernel of truth, that it is likely enough that this has its kernel, too.

As one would expect of a nation of merchants and traders, the Cretans had invented, or perhaps borrowed from Egypt, a decimal system of notation, "in which the units are represented by upright lines, the tens by horizontals, the hundreds by circles, and the thousands by circles with four spurs"; and they were familiar with the calculation of percentages.

The dress of Knossus was in many ways curiously modern, almost as modern as its drainage. There were none of the loose, graceful, flowing robes which the

¹ Keftiu = Back-Land, or the Back-of-Beyond to the Egyptians.

Greeks made famous. The women wore "garments carefully sewn and fitted to the shape," tight-fitting bodices laced, so as to give a slender waist. There were puffed sleeves, low necks, bell-shaped skirts with flounces, and even a kind of crinoline. And all their clothing was enriched with beautiful embroidery, for they were wonderful needlewomen. "Why, these were Parisians," said a Frenchman when he saw for the first time the pictures on the walls and vases.

As in Egypt, women had an almost modern equality with men. It was from the mother and not from the father that descent was reckoned, and property passed from mother to daughter, instead of from father to son. So in Egypt at one time the throne descended to the daughter, and the son married his full sister, that with her hand he might obtain the crown. This custom of inheritance through women was as old as the ages. In very early days it was the mother who gathered and guarded the scanty stores and poor belongings of the rude home, while the father wandered far and wide in search of food. It was she who tamed the first animals and sowed the first seeds. So the property was hers. And there was a time before that when the father counted for little in the family, and, perhaps, was not even known for what he was.

Naturally enough in the religion of such a people a goddess held the chief place. It was the same with the inhabitants of the mainland on each side of the Ægean Sea; and when the conquering Greeks brought in their male gods, and conquerors and conquered settled down together, the gods and goddesses settled down too as married couples with the best grace they could. But it was an uneasy union and the myths tell of quarrels and jealousies between husband and wife—quarrels which, in later days, nobody could understand, for nobody knew that the goddess was in the land before

the god, and had been displaced by him. Homer, among other like stories, tells how, at a crisis in the Trojan War, Hera, who favoured the Greeks, tricked her husband Zeus, who was helping the Trojans, and sent him to sleep so that the Greeks might beat back the enemy and save their ships; and he begins the story by telling how Hera looked upon her lord, and behold he was hateful to her soul. But stories such as these became a scandal to later generations, when men who thought about religion felt that those were not the ways of God.

But gods and goddesses come late in the history of religion, and the Cretans still observed the lingering rites of a much older faith. Primitive man sees behind each happening in Nature a personal cause, a doer of the thing, a being in temper and purpose like himself, whose good will he must obtain. Their number is infinite. Such were the spirits that caused the thunder and ruled the winds, that made the corn spring up again after it had died, that clothed the tree once more with leaves, and renewed the generations of man and beast by the birth of young. These spirits of growth were supposed to dwell each in the best of its kind, the tallest tree (the Maypole descends from that), the finest sheaf of corn, the mightiest bull. The Cretans, as we have seen, worshipped the bull. So, in rather a shame-faced way, did the Athenians themselves a thousand years later, for they had in them much more of the blood of the old inhabitants than any of the other Greeks. Each year, at Athens, in the fifth century B.C., a bull was chosen, the best that could be found. He was kept with care and honour, and fed at the public cost. At the end of the year he was solemnly sacrificed, and then "the holy flesh is not offered to a god, it is eaten—to every man his portion—by each and every citizen, that he may get his share of the strength of

the Bull, of the luck of the State" [Jane Harrison, *Ancient Art and Ritual*, p. 89]. And his death must be followed by a resurrection. Another bull is chosen; and it may be that there is even a pretence of bringing the newly "murdered" one to life again. His poor hide is stuffed with straw and sewn up, and he is set upon his feet and yoked to a plough, as though he were alive and ploughing; while the "murderers" must submit to a form of trial, at which in the end the axe and knife that did the deed are "found guilty, condemned, and cast into the sea."

Often enough the priest or king (the earliest kings were also priests) would wear the mask and horns of the sacred beast, and perhaps his skin. These things were holy. The Egyptian kings and priests wore animal masks at their religious ceremonies, and appeared one as a hippopotamus, another as a jackal, another as a hawk, and so on. The same strange rites were practised in England within historical times. At the end of the seventh century A.D. an archbishop had to make a law for the punishment of "anyone who goes about as a stag or a bull; that is making himself into a wild animal and dressing in the skin of an animal and putting on the heads of beasts." But for centuries the practice still went on, to the despair of the bishops, who were always telling their folk "not to make beasts of themselves."

In Crete there is little doubt that the Minos, who was both king and priest, wore a bull-mask. That would be enough to give rise in later days to the legend of the Minotaur, half-man, half-bull. And it was said of the Minotaur that youths and maidens were thrown to him to devour. In that story too there was a kernel of truth. The game of bull-catching was a favourite sport in Knossus. One of the famous wall-paintings in the palace "shows a boy and two girls in male attire,

performing with bulls. One of the girls is about to leap over the bull by catching his horns, or to be tossed by the frantic creature; the other stands with outstretched arms, ready to catch the youth, who is successfully performing the dangerous leap." They had no weapons, these early toreadors, but only staves and nooses. It is probable that at one time the bull-fights had been more than the mere palace-show of the last days of Knossus. There had been a day perhaps when, as part of a dreadful sacrifice, boys and girls were thrown to the bull of Minos for him to gore to death. No doubt the bull-baiting of Spain descends from some such ceremony, carried there by the old race; for many a sport and game, even football itself, can be shown to have had its beginning in some practice of primitive religion.

And Minos—who was Minos? The name, like the name Pharaoh, is apparently a title, for we meet with it in many different generations. It was the title of the king at Knossus. As we have seen, in early days the king was also priest. He had been, he still was, much more than priest. Like the Pharaoh, in the eyes of his subjects he was divine. The Bull-God took his form. He *was* the Bull-God, when he wore the mask.

As Minos was lord of a nation of traders and shipmen he made good laws, and saw that they were kept; for trade can never flourish unless men are sure that robbery and cheating will be punished, and that bargains will not be allowed to be broken or debts to remain unpaid. In those times there were no laws so good or so well kept as his; and so it came to pass that his fame as a lawgiver spread far and wide, and distant countries and after-times told of him as the very model of a stern and upright judge. To the Greeks he even becomes a god, a son of the Greek god Zeus;

and Homer tells how when Odysseus journeyed to Hades he found Minos there.

There [says Odysseus] I saw Minos, the glorious son of Zeus, golden sceptre in hand, giving judgment to the dead from his seat, while they sat and stood about the king through the wide-gated house of Hades, and asked of him judgment. Odyssey, xi. 568-71 (A. T. Murray).

The lord of a nation of traders and shipmen must also be strong and swift to protect his subjects as they fare across the seas. By the sixteenth century B.C. the age-long peace of the Ægean had been broken. Bands of tall fair Northerners had come down from beyond the Balkans: Achæans they called themselves, the first of the Greeks. They seem to have come at first in small numbers; little parties of adventurers and fighting men shouldering their way like so many Normans into great positions among a weaker people by the might of their iron swords (new and so terrible to those who used the softer bronze), and by their shrewd counsel and gift of brilliant speech. Wherever there was a quarrel between neighbouring states, one side or the other would invite them in as allies. They had, too, a way of marrying native princesses, heiresses to the thrones and great possessions of the mainland, to which in due time they succeeded. And they knew how to use what they laid their hands upon. They did not as yet destroy: what they took they defended, keeping other would-be invaders at arms' length. The busy trade went on very much as of old for centuries to come.

Some of these Achæans took to the sea. No folk could live in Greece and not do so. There, no doubt, they would seize and plunder the peaceful trading ships of Crete. Then for the first time the Cretans, in self-defence, became conquerors. It was, no doubt, a Minos, somewhere about 1400 B.C., in that last century

of the life of Knossus, of whom the Greek historian Thucydides tells us that "he was the first of the ancients who is said to have had a navy. He made himself master of a great part of the Hellenic Sea. He conquered the Cyclades . . . and to protect his growing revenues he did his best to clear the sea of pirates."

But now we come once more into the realm of myth. Everybody knows the story of Theseus and the slaying of the Minotaur. Minos for some offence had compelled the Athenians to send him every seven years (myth loves the number seven) seven youths and seven maidens of noble birth, who were thrown into the labyrinth to be done to death and eaten by the Minotaur, the monstrous beast half-bull, half-man. Then Theseus comes on the scene, a half-historical figure, it has been suggested, like our own Arthur. His birth, like that of Romulus, was wrapped in mystery, as was natural if he was an Achæan stranger, which seems likely. Attica was suffering at the hands of lawless ruffians, Prokrustes, Skiron and the rest. No doubt they too were Achæans, who by the help, one may guess, of stout retainers armed with those terrible iron swords and spears, beset the roads and plundered all who used them, like so many robber barons of our King Stephen's reign, when in their misery and despair men said that Christ and His saints slept. But Theseus is like a William the Conqueror or a Henry II. With a strong hand he puts down all disorder, and the King of Athens gratefully adopts him as a son. That, or something like that, is the kernel of truth which myth has magnified. The stout retainers are all forgotten. Tradition gets to work on Prokrustes and Skiron, and gives them at last the shape in which we find them in Plutarch's pages. Theseus, single-handed, does prodigies of valour, and in the end becomes a god or godling, whom grateful Athens worships. As the crowning act

of his career he had volunteered to go to Crete as one of the seven youths. He would slay the Minotaur, and free Athens from the dreadful tribute, or himself die with his fellow-victims. We all know how by the help of Ariadne, the daughter of Minos, and her clue of thread, he achieved the great adventure, made his way back through the mazes of the labyrinth, and, with his little party, sailed victorious home to Athens.

So myth has transformed and magnified a gallant deed of the far past. It is as though our own Sir Francis Drake, instead of living in the full light of history and in the days of print, had made his voyage round the world while there was still no other record or memorial of a great achievement than such as lives on upon the lips of men; always altering, always growing; becoming more wonderful with each generation that passes, until at last it ends in myth, a fairy-story full of miracles. We can guess what would have happened. Some goddess-mother would have given him the winds tied up safely in a bag, all but the Trade Wind that was to waft him across the Pacific. She would have revealed to him miraculously all the plans of his enemies, and on the day of battle she would have redoubled the strength and courage of his companions (some half-dozen at the most), breathing at the same time panic terror into the thronging Spaniards (seventy times seven there would be) who were to be the victims of his prowess. As for his ship, the famous *Golden Hind*, she would have matched the ships of the Phæacians.

Not even the circling hawk, the swiftest of winged things, could have kept pace with her.

Odyssey, xiii. 86, 87 (A. T. Murray).

Knowing and clever would she have been, as that

ship which, in Homer's story, took Odysseus home to Ithaca.

The Phæacians have no pilots, nor steering oars such as other ships have, but their ships of themselves understand the thoughts and minds of men, and they know the cities and rich fields of all peoples, and most swiftly do they cross over the gulf of the sea, hidden in mist and cloud, nor ever have they fear of harm and ruin.

Ibid., viii. 557-63.

And the story would not have allowed him to die disappointed upon an ill-fated voyage. Rather he would have been carried away to heaven in the moment of his triumph, when the Armada fled up the North Sea before him; and there he would have dwelt among the gods, watching always over England till a day should come when he would return to lead her fleets in the hour of her need.

The story of Theseus and the Minotaur is the only hint that legend gives us of the manner in which the Cretan Empire fell. We shall guess that its subject states defied it, and broke its sea-power. The unwallled city was stormed; the holy bull in the innermost shrine was slain, and, somewhere between 1400 and 1350 B.C., there was an end. When, some hundreds of years later, we get a view of Crete again, it is inhabited by Greeks.

We know (the state of the ruined palace tells us) that the end came suddenly, "interrupting the sculptor at his work, the palace servants in their daily tasks; the pitcher was left unfilled, the jar unfinished. Fire swept through the courts and corridors of the huge building, melting bronze, carbonising wood, beans, wheat and seeds, recalcining the lime plaster, preserving by accidental baking the otherwise perishable tablets from which we may yet hope to read the record of a wonderful past."

The oldest known civilisation of Europe was destroyed by barbarian invaders; and the Ægean was to pass through many centuries of dark misery before out of the wreckage a new civilisation developed, the Greek, which Rome adopted, and which flourished for a thousand years before it in turn was destroyed by the onset of the German tribes that broke up the Roman Empire. Then once again violence and ignorance ruled for a thousand years, and men were miserable. It is not yet five hundred years since the Renaissance restored to Europe the Greek learning, and taught once more the long-forgotten method of scientific study, which is to follow truth with a single mind, wherever it may lead. Whether our European civilisation will endure another five hundred years one must sadly doubt. War has weakened and impoverished it; civil strife and ignorance may end it as in Russia. Industry and trade are very quickly killed. If we would save it we must catch something of the Greek spirit, the passionate devotion to the state, and the clear-eyed intelligence that tried to understand the causes of all things that happen, testing the beliefs that men held about them without fear or favour, intent only on one end, to find the truth.

CHAPTER II

THE MIGRATIONS

So Crete had fallen and the leadership of the old civilisation had passed to the cities of the Greek mainland. In many of those cities, as we have seen, Achæan princes already bore rule over the old race, whom in later days the Greeks knew as the Pelasgi. Conquerors and conquered soon united to form one people. All called themselves Achæans. All spoke Greek. The same kind of thing happened more than two thousand years later in England when folk of different races, Britons, Saxons, Danes, and Normans, united to form the English people. But the Achæans, though of Greek origin, were not the Greeks of whom we shall read in the centuries to come. The real invasions, the real mixing of the blood, were to follow. When the great movements of peoples had finished, and the land began to recover again from fire and sword, the Achæans had disappeared, and were now no more than a mere name in story. The folk who followed them, and who rose in four or five centuries from something like barbarism to the height of civilised refinement and intelligence, called themselves the Hellenes. To the Romans (as later to ourselves) they would be known as Greeks, from the name of a tribe on the west coast, with whom southern Italy was in touch: to the peoples of Asia who knew best the Greeks of Asia Minor (the Iâones or Ionians) they were "sons of Javan" or "Yawan." Just so the land which its inhabitants call Deutschland, we call Germany, and the French, Allemagne.

Though after the fall of Knossus some poor corners of the palace were again inhabited, and something of the old life went on for another two hundred years, it was upon a lower scale. The whole standard of life had fallen. The excavations tell us this. They do not yield the beautiful works of art of the earlier centuries of peace. Art was dying: letters were dying. The reason is plain. There are many fighting men about, but few merchants. There is no store of wealth, and so nobody who can employ skilled craftsmen and brilliant artists. The beautiful pottery, the graceful designs, the jewellery, the sculpture, the lifelike pictures of the old days are found no more; but, on the other hand, swords are longer, and they are made of iron instead of bronze—iron that, as Homer says, “of itself draws a man on”—[*Odyssey*, xix. 13]; by which he means that its grim efficiency tempts him to deeds of violence and the sacking of cities. Just, indeed, as Germany’s great armies and many submarines and secret preparation of poison gas drew her on in 1914. When you possess the weapon you want to use it.

By the end of the thirteenth century B.C. the rich and elaborate dress, the sewn and fitted garments of the old civilisation have given place in Crete and on the mainland to a mere blanket hitched together with safety-pins; and the dead, who for immemorial ages had been buried with stately ceremony in tombs heaped with their rich possessions, for use in the underworld, are now burned on funeral pyres. The tomb had no sanctity for the invader: he treated the once sacred dead with rude contempt, and spoiled their dwelling-places. Moreover the emigration of whole populations was becoming frequent, and of necessity they left their dead behind them. Let them be burnt, therefore: it is safer. It was a time of wild disorder. The soldier’s life alone held out any promise to a man. For the rest

there was poverty, famine, utter misery. Life was hard and short, for, as Hesiod said: “in misery men grow old quickly”—[*Works and Days*, 93]. He lived in the ninth century B.C., when the migrations were over, or almost over, and the Ægean world was settling down again, but he has nothing good to say of his own days. “Would,” he says—

Would that I were not among the men of the fifth generation, but either had died before or been born afterwards. For now truly is a race of iron, and men never rest from labour and sorrow by day, and from perishing by night.

Works and Days, 174-8 (Murray).

The Age of Gold was far away now; but tradition still preserved a faint memory of its happy days. Those days the iron sword had banished never to return—never until man has changed his nature, and has made an end of war. For the first time in history a great civilisation had been destroyed by the invention of a new and terrible weapon. The discovery of poison gas and other horrors may yet repeat the tragedy with Europe for the victim.

All the time more and more Northerners were coming down. Fleets of sea-rovers spread terror up and down the Ægean; and overland hordes of warriors, drawn from many races, made their way southwards across the Hellespont or the Bosphorus through Asia Minor and down the Syrian coast to Egypt. “The Isles were restless, disturbed among themselves,” says an Egyptian inscription of the Pharaoh Rameses III. About 1200 B.C., in the eighth year of his reign, Rameses beat the invaders back by hard-won victories on sea and land. But for two centuries the rovers were the plague of the Egyptians of the Delta, and of all peoples whose lands lay open to attack from the sea. There would be the same tale in the far West two thousand years later when the Northmen came.

Homer's pages are full of the adventures of the heroes who gloried in the sacking of cities, in deeds of valour, and the heaps of spoil, as they "roamed after booty over the misty deep whithersoever Achilles led"—[*Odyssey*, iii. 105, 106]. Menelaus, "good at the war-cry," went on that quest to Egypt both before and after the Trojan War, and "gathered much livelihood and gold"—[*ibid.*, iii. 301]. Odysseus too, when he came home, feigning to be a beggar, said that he had been there, and told a story which though fiction is true to life. Addressing Antinous, the chief of the suitors, he says:

"Friend, give me some gift; thou seemest not in my eyes to be the basest of the Achæans, but rather the noblest, for thou art like a king. Therefore it is meet that thou shouldst give even a better portion of bread than the rest; so would I make thy fame known all over the boundless earth. For I too once dwelt in a house of my own among men, a rich man in a wealthy house, and full often I gave gifts to a wanderer, whosoever he was and with whatsoever need he came. Slaves too I had past counting, and all other things in abundance whereby men live well and are reputed wealthy. But Zeus, son of Kronos, brought all to naught, who sent me forth with roaming pirates to go to Egypt, a far voyage, that I might meet my ruin; and in the river Ægyptus I moored my curved ships. Then verily I bade my trusty comrades to remain there by the ships and to guard the ships, and I sent out scouts to go to places of outlook. But my comrades, yielding to wantonness and led on by their own might, straightway set about wasting the fair fields of the men of Egypt; and they carried off the women and little children, and slew the men; and the cry came quickly to the city. Then, hearing the shouting, the people came forth at break of day, and the whole plain was filled with footmen and chariots and the flashing of bronze. And Zeus, who hurls the thunderbolt, cast an evil panic upon my comrades, and none had courage to take his stand and face the foe; for evil surrounded us on every side. So then they slew many of us with the sharp bronze, and others they led up to their city alive, to work for them perforce. But they gave me to a friend who met them to take to Cyprus, and from thence am I now come hither, sore distressed."

Odyssey, xvii. 415 ff. (Murray).

Any stranger who came to you by sea might prove to be a pirate. When Telemachus and his companion went to Pylos, Nestor, before asking who they were, gave them a good meal. It was well to be courteous to visitors who came by sea. When the meal is over and they may be supposed to be in a good humour, he begins to question them:

"Strangers, who are ye? Whence do ye sail over the watery ways? Is it on some business, or do ye wander at random over the sea, even as pirates, who wander hazarding their lives and bringing evil to men of other lands?"

Ibid., iii. 71 ff.

If such a question can be asked without offence it is clear, as Thucydides observed, that to play the pirate was accounted no disgrace. Did not Autolycus, the grandfather of Odysseus, win fame because he surpassed all mankind in the art of thieving? With such visitors about you never knew what your lot would be. You might be a prince to-day, a slave to-morrow.

There were many of the Achæans and their allies among the sea-rovers whom Rameses III. beat back from Egypt. Menelaus, King of Sparta, brother of Agamemnon of Mycenæ, was there. He had left behind in Sparta (so the story ran) Helen his queen, fairest of women, a Pelasgian princess, it would seem, in right of whose hand he had gained his crown; and while he was away, Paris, son of Priam, King of Troy, a Phrygian Northerner, by race and speech akin to the Achæans, stole away the lovely heiress, and carried her to Troy, and with her, of course, the right to the Spartan throne. So there was another war on hand for the Achæans. The queen must be recovered, and perhaps those Trojans, who took toll of all the traffic through the Dardanelles and left no share for Achæan adventurers, might be ousted from their strong fortress-city, a city that knew little peace.

But we must go back some centuries to learn something of the cities of the Greek mainland that, after the fall of Crete, still kept alive the old commerce and the old culture under their Achæan chiefs. Let us take Mycenæ as example. Agamemnon, who led the Greeks to Troy, was to bear rule there in later days. Like his brother Menelaus, he, too, had married a native heiress, Klytemnestra, who murdered him when he came back from the ten years' war.

Between Knossus and Mycenæ with its kindred cities (Argos, Athens, Corinth, Sparta, Tiryns, and the rest) there had been in the old days a close connection. The peoples, as we have seen, were akin. They were in much the same stage of civilisation, a civilisation founded on commerce. They lived very similar lives; their tastes were alike. The remains of their art show that Mycenæ like Knossus was very rich. More fortress than city, it stood hard-by the modern village of Charvati in Argolis, high above the plain, at a junction of mountain passes, commanding the road from Corinth on the northern sea to the southern sea and Argos. It was nine miles in a direct line from the latter, and about seventeen from the former. Agamemnon in his day was king of all three. His was a large kingdom, and a rich, in the days when every man who ruled a single town, and the plain about it, was called a king.

The position of Mycenæ was immensely strong. The citadel stood upon a rocky platform, two sides of which fell away into steep ravines with a sheer drop in places of 150 feet. This platform, about 400 feet long by 200 feet wide at its greatest extent, was also defended by walls of great height and thickness,¹ which in places still rise thirty-five feet above the level ground. It was no robber stronghold. Robber strongholds kill trade; this fostered it. Its task was to protect the busy

¹ They were of the vast thickness of 46 feet in some parts.

traffic that passed from sea to sea. The roads of a country are always a measure of its prosperity. If trade is good and merchants can move freely and safely, roads and other means of communication will be good; if trade is killed, roads perish too—and railways, as in Russia. Knossus and Mycenæ kept their highways in good order, as Rome kept the highways of her empire in its great days. The Mycenæan road, or roads, for there were two from Argos through Mycenæ to Corinth, were very ancient. They had been cut out of the rock, and built of stone. They were not wide roads like ours. Carriages would not pass along them: they were built for the use of trains of loaded mules. The second road was probably cut when the traffic became more than a single road could carry; and it may be that after its construction one was used for the northern journey, and the other for the southern. But these roads were exceptional, for roads in ancient Greece were always few and bad. "Even in the fifth century there was hardly a cart-road which crossed a national boundary." The merchant was but a pedlar; his goods were often carried on his back. The sea was always the Greek highway.

The kings who reigned in Mycenæ between 1500 and 1400 B.C., the last great century of Knossus, were powerful and very wealthy. Six rock tombs of that fifteenth century have been discovered and emptied of their untouched treasure—treasure that speaks of a golden age, for gold was everywhere. All things that the dead could want with them for use in the underworld were there, and the greater part of them were made of gold. There were crowns and cups and vases; bracelets and necklaces and pendants; combs and hairpins and spirals for the hair; golden grasshoppers hung on chains of gold, golden lions and golden griffins; and many golden ornaments embossed with lifelike

pictures of birds and fish and animals in motion. The dead, it would seem, had need of many plates, for plates of gold, thick and round and beautifully decorated with various patterns, were found to the amazing number of 701; and there were many copper jugs and cauldrons, and many lances, swords and knives of bronze. A few articles of silver were found, but of silver Mycenæ plainly took small account.

Three of the bodies found had golden masks upon their faces, and in the same tomb, among much other treasure, were a golden breastplate, a golden shoulder-belt four feet long, a two-handled goblet of gold, weighing four pounds, and a great bull's head in silver, with fifty tiny copies of it in gold, to remind us of Crète and its worship of the bull. Two beautiful bronze swords were found. The princes of Mycenæ used no iron as yet. The blades were short and broad, and beautifully inlaid with silver and gold, the work, it would seem, of some of Crète's best artists. Engraved upon them were pictures of lions chasing deer, of huntsmen attacking a lion with javelins, and of wild-fowl startled into flight by prowling cats; all natural and lifelike in their rapid movement.

In some sort a rival of Mycenæ and the towns of the Greek mainland was the famous fortress-city of Ilium or Troy, where in the thirteenth century B.C. there were settled, as we have seen, Phrygian Northerners of the Trojan tribe, akin to the Achæans. They had come down not long before from beyond the Balkans by way of Thrace, and had crossed by the Bosphorus or the Dardanelles into Asia Minor. There in its north-western corner, a bare three miles from the entrance to the Dardanelles, upon a hill now called Hissarlik, or The Castle Hill, whence all the plain country north and west to the sea is overlooked and

dominated, they founded the sixth city that had stood upon the site in perhaps a thousand years. Never for long had there been peace here, for the Dardanelles, or Hellespont, as the straits were then called, had served through the centuries as a convenient crossing-place for the migrating Northerners, who were pushing their way southwards to the homes of wealth they meant to spoil. The site of the fortress was evidently a point of danger, yet none of the invaders who in succession seized and burnt the city could resist its attractions. One after another they rebuilt its walls and "topless towers." There must have been strong reasons for wanting to possess it, as well as for wanting to destroy it.

In the year 2000 B.C. a strong fortress stood there, the second of the nine "cities" whose remains excavation has revealed. Its site was a bare two acres in extent, no space for a city as we measure cities. Among the ashes of that second "city" the diggers discovered a fragment of a rare white stone, called nephrite, that must have come all the way from China, for it is to be found no nearer. Such a distance could trade travel even then by immemorial highways, such as was the Hellespont, linking, as it did, the Mediterranean civilisation to the Black Sea coasts, and so to farthest Asia.

That fortress-city was destroyed by fire and sword. The third, fourth and fifth cities had gone the same way, when in the thirteenth century B.C. the Trojans built the sixth city, and fortified it with the help of allies, whom, characteristically, they cheated of the price that they were pledged to pay. It was a larger city than the second. The area enclosed was about five acres—the area that the Palace-city of Knossus covered. This time the builders thought that they had made it impregnable. Long stretches of their wall, built of

squared blocks of stone, still after three thousand years rise twenty feet above the ground. At the very top it has the huge thickness of sixteen feet, and as though that were not enough great towers strengthen it at intervals. It would not fall to force, not in ten years. Trickery, stratagem—some Wooden Horse or the like—alone would find an entrance.

It had need be strong, standing where it stood, for the site drew men to it, and its Trojan masters in their pride and confidence had set the whole of the Ægean world against them. It commanded the highway of the Hellespont, and could hold up at will all the traffic of the Straits. Those who passed paid toll. Legend makes it plain that the exactions of the Trojans were intolerable, and that no man could trust their word, for they broke all pledges. When, therefore, Priam's son Paris, if legend speaks truth, stole Helen away from Sparta, patience was exhausted, and all the Achæans with their allies banded themselves together to take vengeance and destroy the presumptuous city once again. Then followed the ten years' war. That such a war was fought, and that Troy, unconquerable by force, fell in the end to stratagem, there is no reasonable ground for doubting. That it was sacked and burnt the ruins themselves tell us. But that Homer's *Iliad*, which professes to tell the events of a few weeks in the last year of the siege, is history no one pretends. Often enough, no doubt, there are kernels of fact, as there are in the Minotaur story, but it is impossible to say what is fact and what is fiction. Great artists in words were at work for too long upon the story of "Troy's doom-crimson shore."

With the fall of Troy an end came to the last lingering glories of the old Mycenæan civilisation. At least Troy stood for some sort of order. When it fell its conquerors fell with it. They were too weak and poverty-stricken

to beat back the new invaders. Legend tells of little but disaster to the returning heroes; and after their sons' days there is nothing. Even legend is dumb. Darkness settles down on Greece, and centuries pass that have left no story. The Dorian tribes had begun to force their way down through the very heart of Greece. Savage conquerors they were, who showed no mercy. Their proudest title is "sacker of cities." Henceforth land and sea are full of men fighting and men flying. Commerce and art are dead. Mycenæ passes out of history. Mules tramp no longer up its rock-hewn roads. Wealth and ease, leisure and refinement are gone. There is no peace. Men wear blanket cloaks and their swords are long. When they are not fighting, they are farmers wresting a bare living from the soil, always with a sword handy, and an eye upon the mountain passes and the nearest beach. There is no room in such a world for city life. When last we hear in the *Odyssey* of the Achæan princes, there is no tale of splendid palaces and kings rich in gold and jewels. There are no thronging priests, or courtiers, or dutiful attendants; no artists or craftsmen, no merchants or judges. Odysseus is well skilled in carpentry. With his own hands he builds and rigs his raft when he leaves the island of Kalypso. He is unrivalled (like some Dane) as a sea-captain; none of his followers so cunning to sail a ship. Therefore he says:

"I had ever kept in hand the sheet of the ship, and had yielded it to none other of my comrades, that we might the sooner come to our native land."

Odyssey, x. 32-3 (Murray).

His father Laertes is a practical farmer and gardener. Odysseus finds him

alone in the well-ordered vineyard, digging about a plant; and he was clothed in a foul tunic, patched and wretched, and about his shins he had bound stitched greaves of ox-hide to

guard against scratches, and he wore gloves upon his hands because of the thorns.

Odyssey, xxiv. 226 ff. (Murray).

Odysseus himself, too, can match any sturdy labourer at his work. So, while disguised as a beggar, he makes boast to one of the suitors:

"I would that we two might have a match in working in the season of spring, when the long days come, at mowing the grass, I with a curved scythe in my hands and thou with another like it, and that the grass might be in plenty that so we might test our work, fasting till late evening. Or I would again that there were oxen to drive and that there were a field of four acres, and the soil should yield before the plough: then shouldst thou see me, whether or no I could cut a straight furrow to the end."

Ibid., xviii. 366 ff.

No prince of Knossus or Egypt or old Mycenæ mowed grass or drove a plough.

Even kings' daughters have to play the laundress in good earnest. When Athene plans that the lovely Nausikaa, daughter of Alkinous, Phæacia's king, shall meet Odysseus on the beach where he has struggled to land after the wreck of his raft, she puts it in her head to go off to the washing-place near the river mouth, and do the family washing with her maidens. So she asks her father for the waggon and the mule team.

"Father, dear, wilt thou not make ready for me a waggon, high and stout of wheel, that I may take to the river for washing the goodly raiment of mine which is lying here soiled? Moreover for thyself it is seemly that when thou art at council with the princes thou shouldst have clean raiment upon thee; and thou hast five sons living in thy halls, and these ever wish to put on them freshly washed raiment, when they go to the dance."

Ibid., vi. 57 ff.

So far the poet. The historian tells the same tale. in ancient times," says Herodotus, "even those

who were rulers over men were poor in money, and not the common people only; and the wife of the king cooked for them their food herself"—[viii. 137].

This is the society in which the poets lived who fashioned and sang the lays, which after much editing and alteration we have as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The lays were born of the roving fighting days in which Homer (or the Homeric poets) saw nothing but glory. He took the chieftain's view, for the minstrel lived in the courts of chieftains and to them war was a great game. Hesiod, who composed his poems at much the same time, in the middle of the ninth century B.C., sees not the glory, but the misery that the migrations, with all their heritage of violence, have brought upon the common folk. The Greek world had to begin again; the old one had gone out in ruin. The civilisation of Knossus and Mycenæ perished as completely as the Roman civilisation in Britain perished when the Saxons came. Over most of the mainland and the islands there was a change of population, just as there was in England in the sixth century A.D. The people fled by sea to all parts of the Mediterranean before the Dorians. Even the fugitives became invaders in their turn, and woe to the land they marked for their new home! No enemies so dangerous as they. There was no homeland to fall back upon. Retreat was impossible: they must plunder and slay, or die. Professor Murray has painted a vivid picture of the time:

But what of the migrations by sea? . . . When a tribe moved by land it took most of its belongings with it. When it had to cross the sea a possession must needs be very precious indeed before it could be allowed room in those small boats. Of course there are cases where a deliberate invasion is planned, as the Saxons, for instance, planned their invasion of Britain. The fighting men go first and secure a foothold; the rest of the nation can follow when things are safe. . . . In the earlier

migrations of the Dark Age a tribe, or mass of people, seldom took to the sea till driven by the fear of death. That was no time to think of taking women or herds. You might desire greatly to take your young wife—or your old wife, for that matter; but you would scarcely dare to make such a proposal to the hungry fighters about you. You might wish to take your little boy. But would the rest of us, think you, choose to be encumbered with another consumer of bread who could never help in a fight, who might delay us in charging or flying, might cry from the pain of hunger or fatigue and betray us all? No, leave him on the beach, and come! Put some mark on him. Probably someone will make him a slave, and then, with good luck, you may some day knock up against him and pay his ransom.

When we are off on the sea, what is the prospect before us? We have some provisions, though no water. Instead we take guides who know where there are springs near the sea-shore in divers islands and unfrequented promontories. We can move by night and hide in caves during the day. The guide probably knows places where cattle may, with some risk, be raided. Better still, he knows of some villages that have been lately attacked by other pirates, where the men are still weak with their wounds. Not all their flocks have been killed. We might well take the rest. If we stay at sea, we die of thirst. If we are seen landing, we are for certain massacred by any human beings who find us. Piracy on the high seas will not keep us alive. In the good old days, when the Northmen first came, pirates could live like fighting-cocks and be buried like princes. But the business has been spoiled. There are too many men like ourselves, and too few ships with anything on them to steal. If we go back to our old home, the invaders have by this time got our women as slaves, and will either kill us or sell us in foreign countries. Is there anywhere an island to seize? There are many little desert rocks all studded over the Ægean, where doubtless we have rested often enough when the constrained position of sitting everlastingly at the oars has been too much for us; rested and starved, and some of us gone mad with thirst under that hot sun. A waterless rock will be no use. Can we seize some inhabited island? Alone we are too weak; but what if we combined with some other outlaws? There are some outcast Carians in like plight with ourselves in one of the desert caves near. In our normal life we would not touch a Carian. Their weapons are no gentleman's weapons. Their voices make one sick. And their hair . . . ! But what does it matter now? . . . And with them are some Leleges, who worship birds; some unknown savages from the eastern side, dark-bearded, hook-nosed creatures

answering to babyish names like "Atta" and "Babba" and "Duda"; and—good omen—some of our old enemies from near home, the tribe that we were always fighting with and had learned to hate in our cradles. A pleasure to meet them again! One can understand their speech. We swear an oath that makes us brothers. We cut one another's arms, pour the blood into a bowl and drink some all round. We swear by our gods! to make things pleasanter, we swear by one another's gods, so far as we can make out their outlandish names. And then forth to attack our island.

After due fighting it is ours. The men who held it yesterday are slain. Some few have got away in boats, and may some day come back to worry us; but not just yet, not for a good long time. There is water to drink: there is bread and curded meat and onions. There is flesh of sheep or goats. There is wine, or, at the worst, some coarser liquor of honey or grain, which will at least intoxicate. One needs that, after such a day. . . . No more thirst, no more hunger, no more of the cramped galley benches, no more terror of the changes of wind and sea. The dead men are lying all about us. We will fling them into the sea to-morrow. The women are suitably tied up and guarded. The old one who kept shrieking curses has been spiked with a lance and tossed over the cliffs. The wailing and sobbing of the rest will stop in a day or two: if it torments you, you can easily move a few paces away out of the sound. If it still rings in your ears, drink two more cups and you will not mind it. The stars are above us, and the protecting sea round us, we have got water and food and roofs over our heads. And we wrought it all by our own wisdom and courage and the manifest help of Zeus and Apollo. What good men we are, and valiant and pious; and our gods—what short work they make of other men's gods!

Rise of the Greek Epic, 72 ff.

After this time of turmoil was over civilised society had to build itself up anew from the beginning. There was no room in days like those for art and artists, no room, no time for grace or beauty, or for any skill but that of swordsmen, and sailors, farmers, ship-builders, smiths and potters (there are always smiths and potters, for a man cannot make his own horse-shoes or the family water-jugs)—of these, and of the minstrels who sang of their wars and their voyages for the entertainment of chieftains and their followers

in the hall at night. The lifelike paintings on the walls of Knossus were beyond such folk.¹ The artists of Egypt and Mycenæ belonged to the age of gold; an age of iron has no place for the arts of peace. What does Hesiod say?

Now truly is a race of iron, and men never rest from labour and sorrow by day and from perishing by night; and the gods shall lay sore trouble upon them. Zeus will destroy this race of mortal men when they come to have grey hair on the temples at their birth. The father will not agree with his children, nor the children with their father, nor guest with his host, nor comrade with comrade; nor will brother be dear to brother as aforetime. Men will dishonour their parents as they quickly grow old, and will carp at them, chiding them with bitter words, hard-hearted they, not knowing the fear of the gods. They will not repay their aged parents the cost of their nurture, for might shall be their right: and one man will sack another's city. There will be no favour for the man who keeps his oath or for the just or for the good; but rather men will praise the evil-doer and his violent dealing. Strength will be right and reverence will cease to be.

Works and Days, 177 ff. (Evelyn-White).

How many times that tale has been told since then! And always violence, as Hesiod saw, brings its own punishment.

Wealth should not be seized: god-given wealth is much better; for if a man take great wealth violently and perforce, or if he steal it through his tongue, as often happens when gain deceives men's sense and dishonour tramples down honour, the gods soon blot him out and make that man's house low, and wealth attends him only for a little time.

Ibid., 320 ff.

And again:

For those who practise violence and cruel deeds far-seeing Zeus ordains a punishment. Often even a whole city suffers for a bad man who sins and devises presumptuous deeds, and Zeus lays great trouble upon the people, famine and plague together,

¹ Compare the "Tenean Apollo" with its "archaic grin" with the "Cupbearer"

so that the men perish away, and their women do not bear children, and their houses become few.

Ibid., 238 ff.

"Justice," as he says elsewhere (217), "beats Outrage when she comes to the end of the race." He had seen it, and he knew. Has not the same fate befallen Russia? Violence and outrage were to bring all manner of good things to the workers, but instead "the men perish away, and their houses become few." The population of Petrograd, or Leningrad as it is now called, has shrunk to a fraction of what it was before the revolution. No man will build a factory or buy machinery or open a shop, any more than a Greek in those troubled centuries would plant an orchard. What is the use, when, as Thucydides says, you can never tell if someone will not come down upon you and take it all away? If there is no security, no capital will be available and there is neither work nor wages. The standard of living sinks back to that of the barbarian. Schools and doctors, books and theatres disappear; roads and railways and houses fall to ruin: towns dwindle to mere villages. There are no longer toys for children: they have few games and little rest. All history tells the same tale. From the fall of Minoan Crete to the fall of Tsarist Russia, how many chapters end with the wreck of an empire, the disappearance of an old civilisation, and the slow emergence of its infant successor from the gipsy level of culture once again. That wheel has not ceased turning.

¹ It was the same when the Saxon invaders ruined Roman Britain. They were very much like the Greek sea-wanderers, without however, their graces and their quick intelligence. It was a thousand years before the English even approached the level of the civilisation which they so utterly destroyed: the Greek in less than half the time had far surpassed his predecessors.

pictured walls, and cups of bronze and silver, and
perchance an urn

with breed
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed.

CHAPTER III

THE IONIANS

THERE was an end of the old life, the old civilisation, in the Ægean world. It was not that the old race had been exterminated. That kind of thing seldom happens. It is plain that there were many of the original stock left in Greece. In Attica, which as the map shows lay off the main route of the invaders as they forced their way southwards, there was less disturbance of the old race and its traditions. Elsewhere men would be few. Some had escaped beyond the sea. The rest for the most part had fallen fighting or had been put to the sword by the conquerors. But everywhere there would be women and children. This is no mere guess. We learn from Homer the ways of these invaders, whose adventures he immortalised. So Odysseus tells King Alkinous in Phæacia:

"From Ilios the wind bore me and brought me to the Kikones, to Ismarus. There I sacked the city and slew the men; and from the city we took their wives and great store of treasure and divided them among us."

Odyssey, ix. 39-42 (Murray).

Though the survivors had never known the splendid days when the Mycenæan civilisation was in its prime, we may be sure that tradition had preserved some memory of them. They would talk of what once had been—of the dim far-away golden age—and would point admiringly to the work of the old artists that here and there might still be seen, painted vases, and

The conquered, as so often has happened, would begin to educate their conquerors, and in turn they learned from them their glorious language.

But what is once ruined is not easily restored. Warfare and pillage, when prolonged for generations, produce poverty and ignorance. Men are fighters or farmers, or perhaps more often both. Women spin and weave, cook and do the washing. Division of labour ceases. Trade is crippled, and would almost cease if it were not that even farmers' wives love trinkets and a fine dress, and soldiers fine swords and drinking-cups. Men may still know that once their land was orderly and peaceful, rich in beautiful things and in knowledge and good learning, but they cannot bring back again the days of old. They can undo in fifty years what will not be restored in five hundred, and in five what fifty will not recover. After Rome fell a thousand years had to pass before Europe regained the lost ground. The world lives faster, moves more quickly now, and nations can help one another with loans of money and ship-loads of food, and with the knowledge and the skill of men, in a way that was impossible when there were no railways or steamships, no telegraphs or printed books. But to restore even backward, uneducated Russia to its pre-war condition will be a long, slow task. Meanwhile all suffer. On the rest of Europe war has left its mark. Society is shaken, impoverished, weakened. We are nearer to disaster than we know. No nation of the many that have suffered eclipse since history began has ever yet foreseen its day of ruin. To the end they have persisted in the

foolish courses that made it inevitable, paying no heed to the few, the prophets, who preached the unwelcome truth, but lending always a ready ear to the flatterers who told them what they wished to hear.

In the long peace of Crete science and art had made great strides forward. But men cannot give their lives to thought unless they have quiet about them, and enough to live upon; and it was to be many a day before Greece would know peace and plenty again. Tribes were still moving. There was no security. It was not worth while to plant orchards of olive-trees—the wealth of continental Greece. It was hardly worth while to save. There was no growth of capital, and without that progress is impossible, and men must live hard, poor lives. We are not even yet sufficiently unselfish to save unless we know that what we save we shall have for our own benefit or for that of our children after us. Moreover there was as yet no city life in Greece. The invaders were used to space and movement. They could no more endure the crowded town life than could the Saxons when first they came to England. Greece was not ready to make the new beginning. That appeared, as so often happens, in a fresh quarter.

While Hesiod in the middle of the ninth century was sorrowing like some Hebrew prophet over the misery and poverty which the violence of that age of iron had brought upon his country, a new people with a new outlook upon life had come into being along the western coast of Asia Minor, the modern Anatolia. These were the Ionian Greeks. Far into Asia men were talking of their quick wit, of their courage and military skill, and of their enterprise in trade. The writer of the tenth chapter of Genesis knew the sons of Javan by whom the isles of the Gentiles were

divided; and Ezekiel (chapter xxvii.) told how their traders brought "bright iron," vessels of brass, slaves and other merchandise to the markets and fairs of Tyre. Egyptian Pharaohs employed them as professional soldiers to stiffen their native troops against the Assyrian, and after Nineveh had fallen (612 B.C.) Greek soldiers of fortune served Nebuchadnezzar in far-off Babylon. Their enterprise in trade they never lost, and it persists in their remote descendants to this day, but their warlike spirit faded as wealth tempted them to luxury, and before many generations had passed these young conquerors themselves were conquered.

The Anatolian seaboard, the land which they made for ever famous as Ionia, was and is a much richer land than Greece. At that time, according to Herodotus, its climate was unrivalled. It was "more favoured by skies and seasons than any country known to us," he says, and no man of his day was more widely travelled. Its soil is fruitful: the soil of Greece is thin and poor. The rivers of Greece are useless to it. In summer a mere trickle of water finds its way down the middle of their rocky beds: in winter after heavy rains they are torrents. No seaports spring up at the mouths of rivers such as these. The rivers of Ionia are like our own. Their valleys are long: the lands about their mouths are fertile; their course is steady. The shipping of the old world could make its way up and down such rivers, and there was good trade waiting to be done.

Neither the Cretans nor the early Achæans appear to have gained much foothold on that tempting coast. It lies defenceless at the foot of easy roads that lead down from the highlands of the interior, where always dwell hardier races who covet its possession. The modern Greek has failed to hold it against the Turk, as the history of the ages might have taught him to

expect to fail. In the dawn of history, when the Minoans were masters of the Ægean, the Hittites were the inland power who, it would seem, kept the coast secure against invasion. Their ancient empire (of which very little is known, for the small remains of their language cannot yet be read) extended from the Black Sea into Palestine, and from the Ægean coast beyond the Euphrates. They had broken the power of the first Babylonian empire about 1800 B.C.: they did battle with the great Egyptian Pharaohs of the eighteenth and nineteenth dynasties for the mastery of Syria, and at last, in 1271 B.C., by a treaty that still survives, they entered into an offensive and defensive alliance with Rameses II. against some unnamed enemy, probably Assyria, whose advance to power was alarming both. But the Northerners were on the move, and the nearer East was soon to have fresh masters. By the time of the great raids upon Egypt, about 1200 B.C.,¹ the Hittites had fallen. They were no longer masters, but were marching as subject allies in the host of their conquerors. Two centuries later we find a Hittite officer, Uriah, in the service of King David at Jerusalem.

The Phrygians were the next overlords of Western Anatolia; but they never had the wide power of the Hittites. They were themselves invaders from Europe, and their Greek cousins pressed upon their heels. In early parts of the Iliad the Phrygians are still masters of much of the coast, and of the neighbouring islands. But they lost these as they lost Troy, and withdrew into the hills. There for centuries they maintained themselves against pressure from north and east (in the east the fierce Assyrian was rising to his height of power) under kings who bore the name of Mita, which the Greeks called Midas, the last of whom, the wealthy

¹ See above p. 19.

king whose touch in legend turns everything into gold, was overthrown with his people about 675 B.C. by the invasion of another horde of Northerners, the Kimmerians, utter barbarians from what is now Southern Russia. These invaders, who have left their name to this day in the Crimea, had been beaten off by Assyria three years earlier, and turning westward they overran most of Asia Minor, until at last they were driven out by the Lydians. These were another inland people who since the overthrow of the Phrygian power had come to the front, and who from their capital at Sardis did much in the coming years to shape the fortunes of Ionia. To them we shall return.

When exactly the migration of the Greeks into Asia Minor began, and when it ended, we do not know. There can be no doubt that it took a long time, and was at its height in the eleventh century, when the pressure of the Dorians, as they forced their way down to the Peloponnese, drove many of the older peoples out of Greece to seek a refuge overseas. They would sail in little parties like that which the *Mayflower* carried to America; and as the news filtered back of the fair land they had found, more and still more would follow. They were a mixed folk, as we have seen, and they married with women of other races, whom they found where they settled. Out of the union of many races sprang the gifted stock who gave back to Greece all and more than all the art and culture that invasion and centuries of disorder had destroyed.

But first had to come peace and order; then successful trade and gathering of wealth; and after that leisure for a life given to thought and study, to art, philosophy and literature.

Meanwhile their voyagings for centuries as raiders or merchant venturers had given them their early

schooling, always widening the range of their eager, curious minds. They had learned many things of many nations. They had studied their ways of thought, their differing religions. They had seen the art and culture of older peoples than themselves, in Egypt, in Syria, in Cyprus. And they had learned from the Phœnicians both at home and abroad; for when the Cretan traders vanished from the sea, the Phœnicians pushed into the gap, bringing something perhaps of Eastern learning, and certainly the alphabet that the Greeks adopted. For though the letters are now supposed to have come originally from Crete, they reached Greece bearing Phœnician names.

The picture which Eumæus, the swineherd of Odysseus, gives us in the *Odyssey* (itself Ionian) of Phœnician traders enables us to see them through Ionian eyes, and at the same time reveals the experiences of many an Ionian. Eumæus had been born a prince. His father Ktesius, "a man like to the immortals," was king of "an isle called Syria, above Ortygia, where are the turning-places of the sun."

Thither came Phœnicians, men famed for their ships, greedy knaves, bringing countless trinkets in their black ship.

Odyssey, xv. 415-16 (Murray).

His nurse was a Phœnician woman, a slave. She tells her story to one of the Phœnicians, who had won her love.

"Out of Sidon, rich in bronze, I declare that I come, and I am the daughter of Arybas, to whom wealth flowed in streams. But Taphian pirates seized me, as I was coming from the fields, and brought me hither, and sold me to the house of yonder man, and he paid for me a goodly price."

Ibid., xv. 425-9.

Her lover promised to take her home again, that she might see

"the high-roofed house of thy father and mother, and see them, too. For of a truth they yet live, and are accounted rich."

Ibid., xv. 431-3.

She agreed to go, and she would pay well for her passage.

"When your ship is laden with goods," she says, "let a message come quickly to me at the palace; for I will also bring whatever gold comes under my hand. Aye, and I would gladly give another thing for my passage. There is a child of my noble master, whose nurse I am in the palace, such a cunning child, who ever runs abroad with me. Him would I bring on board, and he would fetch you a vast price, wherever you might take him for sale among men of strange speech."

Ibid., xv. 446-53.

But in those days men took their time about their business. There was as yet no coined money. Bars or lumps of gold and silver were in use; but barter was still a favourite way of buying and selling. If you were a Phœnician or an Ionian, you exchanged a cargo of your manufactured goods, your purple cloth, or your best olive oil in jars, and the cheap trinkets that primitive peoples still love, for a cargo of the raw products—hides perhaps, or grain, or flax, or figs—of undeveloped countries. It was a slow process. It took more than a summer, and in winter ships were laid up, and there was no voyaging. So, says Eumæus,

"they remained there in our land a full year, and got by trade much substance in their hollow ship. But when their hollow ship was laden for their return, then they sent a messenger to bear tidings to the woman. There came a man, well versed in guile, to my father's house with a necklace of gold, and with amber beads was it strung between. This the maidens in the hall and my honoured mother were handling, and were gazing on it, and were offering him their price; but he nodded to the woman in silence. Then verily when he had nodded to her, he went his way to the hollow ship, but she took me by the hand, and led me forth from the house. Now in the fore-hall of the palace she found the cups and tables of the banqueters, who waited upon my father. They had gone forth to the council and the people's place of debate, but she quickly hid three goblets in her bosom, and bore them away; and I followed in my heedlessness. Then the sun set, and all the ways grew dark. And we made haste and came to the goodly harbour, where was the swift ship of the Phœnicians. Then they embarked, putting both of us on board

as well, and sailed over the watery ways, and Zeus sent them a favourable wind. For six days we sailed, night and day alike; but when Zeus, son of Kronos, brought upon us the seventh day, then Artemis, the archer, smote the woman, and she fell with a thud into the hold, as a sea-bird plunges. Her they cast forth to be a prey to seals and fishes, but I was left, my heart sore stricken. Now the wind, as it bore them, and the wave, brought them to Ithaca, where Laertes bought me with his wealth. Thus it was that my eyes beheld this land."

Odyssey, xv. 455-84 (Murray).

When the Ionians became eager competitors in the trade of the Eastern Mediterranean, the Phœnicians disappeared. They went westward along the African coast to Sicily and Spain and the Straits, and even beyond to Britain; and in the spirit of great merchant venturers they made their way from the Red Sea round Africa, taking three years for the voyage, sowing and reaping harvests on the way. Their genius was overshadowed in a world of Greeks, and like Matthew Arnold's Scholar Gipsy they shunned all intercourse with a people whom they could never understand, and who heartily disliked them.

Then fly our greetings, fly our speech and smiles!

—As some grave Tyrian trader, from the sea,

Descried at sunrise an emerging prow

Lifting the cool-hair'd creepers stealthily,

The fringes of a southward-facing brow

Among the Ægean isles;

And saw the merry Grecian coaster come,

Freighted with amber grapes, and Chian wine,

Green, bursting figs, and tunnies steep'd in brine—

And knew the intruders on his ancient home,

The young light-hearted masters of the waves—

And snatch'd his rudder, and shook out more sail,

And day and night held on indignantly

O'er the blue Midland waters with the gale,

Betwixt the Syrtes and soft Sicily,

To where the Atlantic raves

Outside the western straits, and unbent sails

There where down cloudy cliffs, through sheets of foam,

Shy traffickers, the dark Iberians come;

And on the beach undid his corded bales.

The gift of an alphabet to a people who have had no better means of written expression than a host of signs for syllables is a very precious gift. It makes possible a long step forward on the path of intellectual advance. With an alphabet writing becomes easy; all can learn the art: without an alphabet it is a slow and difficult task, which only the few can attempt. And the practice of writing, in its turn, makes for clear thinking. But if the Phœnicians found the instrument of expression, Egypt, the first mother of civilisation, did much to inspire the mind that used it. The Ionians had fought there for centuries, first as raiders, then as lifeguards and mercenaries to the Pharaohs. Then they traded there, and settled in the land, till at last they had their own cities in the Delta, whence no doubt they conducted the export to their own country of the corn that was in Egypt. That was the beginning of the Hellenisation of Egypt, which was completed after Alexander took the country from the Persians. Between the settlers in Egypt and the parent cities in Ionia there was plainly much communication; and the great mass of information which the Egyptians had acquired was put to the service of minds which knew how to deal with it, and bring out its full significance. Thousands of years had passed since the Egyptians began their experiments in building and engineering, and in measuring all things in heaven and earth. By long practice they had found out a number of formulæ, which lay at the foundation of the later science of geometry. Necessity had taught them. They had learnt by doing. They could not raise their taxes on land unless they could fix the boundaries of the holdings. But as the Nile every year swept away the landmarks, a system of land-measuring,¹ or land-surveying, had to be devised, which could be relied upon to replace

¹ Geometry means land-measuring.

them accurately. As architects who were always planning vast buildings, they had to know the quantities of brick or stone that would be required to build them; as stewards or merchants they wanted to be able to calculate rapidly the amount of corn or other produce contained in storehouses or measures of a given size and shape. The priests had discovered the rules for these calculations. They served their purpose; but why they did so was a question that it was not in Egyptian minds to ask. The science of mathematics was waiting to be discovered, but the Egyptian had no love of knowledge for its own sake, and the discovery was not made until another type of mind began to think about the facts, and wonder what they meant. For philosophy, which is the love of knowledge, begins, as the Greek knew, with wonder, and the Egyptian did not wonder. He accepted things as they were—as they had been for immemorial ages. The Greeks, on the other hand, wanted to know the why and the wherefore of everything. They asked themselves why the method produced the result, why it gave the right answer to the question. In their ceaseless curiosity they were like children, and indeed to the Egyptian, with whole millennia of history and fixed tradition behind him, they were but children. "You Greeks are always young," said the Egyptian priest to Solon; "there is not an old man among you. . . . You are all young in mind. You accept no old traditions from the past, nor have you any science that bears the marks of age"—[Plato, *Timæus*, 22B]. It was true, of course. Age, to the Ionians, was no warranty for an opinion; rather it made it suspect, as to some extent it does in America to-day. They would accept no statement on the authority of antiquity, whether it came through priest, or philosopher, or schoolmaster. They would test it, and satisfy themselves whether it was well

founded; and they were not hindered by any mistaken appeal of a priestly class to a sacred book: for there was no sacred book to misunderstand, and misuse, and convert into a barrier against the free use of the God-given intellect. So they put aside the tales which had been told by the older peoples about the beginning of the world. Those peoples saw in everything that happened—in day and night, in the waxing and waning of the year, in flood and thunder, in the flowering of plants and trees, and in the success or failure of their crops—evidence of interference by a hand and mind like their own but immensely more powerful. The Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Jews were satisfied with the rather childish stories by which their wise men tried to explain how the world began. Tradition was sacred: it was wrong, it was even dangerous, to inquire too closely. The gods had their high secrets, which they hid from men. There are cautious minds to this day—a hundred years ago they were the great majority—that are not entirely free from this superstitious fear of the consequences of free inquiry. But the Ionian thinkers were as daring as the Ionian voyagers. Like Tennyson's Ulysses they were possessed by a

spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

Tradition did not fetter them. Superstition did not frighten them. Sentiment did not weigh with them. They would know for themselves. Without any prejudice in favour of this theory or against that, and with an "unclouded clearness of mind" that has never since been equalled, they would observe for themselves, would examine all the facts and find their laws. Of what was the earth made? Did the sun move round the earth, or the earth round the sun? How far away

was the sun? What was its real size? What was the size of the earth? These and many other questions they asked, and they or their successors during the next two or three centuries answered them. Their answers were not all of them right, but they were more nearly right than any answers that men were to find during the next two thousand years.¹ These people let thought range freely, no matter what had been believed before, no matter where the argument might lead them. That was the wonderful thing. Few of us have such utter faith in Mind. We are most of us slaves of our surroundings. We still

accept the old,
Contest the strange, acknowledge work that's done,
Misdoubt men who have still their work to do.

BROWNING.

And that old teaching which we accept ready-made we call "Knowledge." But the Greeks were quick to see that what one generation calls knowledge, another finds to be but a poor ignorant mistaken guess. We are little the better for "knowledge" of that kind. That is why one Greek philosopher said that "much knowledge does not teach understanding," and why another advised men to "aim at much thought rather than at much knowledge."

But the man who makes us think, and who teaches new things—the prophet—still finds his way hard. Disciples are few, adversaries many. In Christian Europe, even after the revival of learning in the sixteenth century, the misunderstanding and misuse of the Bible still barred the way to free inquiry, and many a man was burnt for daring to think for himself, and to contradict what the men of religion mistakenly called knowledge, supposing it to be the very word

¹ The fruits of Greek science were lost to the world during the second thousand.

of God. So late as 1633 A.D. Galileo was compelled by Pope and cardinals, under threats of heavy punishment, to say that the earth was the centre of the universe, and did not move round the sun, though when Pythagoras in the sixth century B.C. first divined the truth, and when Aristarchus of Samos three centuries later developed the planetary theory, which Copernicus was to rediscover and demonstrate to an incredulous world in the sixteenth century A.D., no man's conscience was offended. Very slowly have we won our way back to the liberty of thought which the Greek enjoyed. It is not a century yet since Darwin and Huxley had to face a storm of obloquy for teaching the doctrine of evolution, because it would not square with the story of the creation as told in the book of Genesis. The new doctrine was thought to be an outrage on religion and a danger to humanity. Of course the Master never taught His Church to put man's mind in fetters. No great cause ever yet established itself by prohibiting discussion and inquiry. That is the way to make rebels and martyrs, and to win sympathy for them. Christianity itself was founded by rebels against an older tradition, rebels so resolute that they would die, and did die by thousands, rather than be silenced. It is strange and sad to see how often the persecuted in their turn become persecutors. Not even yet can we claim that men have learnt that persecution is no ally of Truth.

CHAPTER IV

THE BEGINNINGS OF CITY LIFE IN GREECE

How came it then that the mind of the Ionian Greek was so free from prejudice? How came he to love truth so devotedly, to shake off so easily the superstitions and traditional beliefs of his environment, to sift all facts so dispassionately, and to follow the light of reason so fearlessly wherever it might lead? His forefathers on the Greek side had been folk of migratory tribes dwelling among their flocks and herds, obedient in every detail of their daily life to tribal customs, worshipping tribal gods of human form and human character. They were very slow, very unwilling, to alter anything that their forefathers had done. They would believe and act as tradition and custom required. They could not so much as kill an ox without a ceremony, nor eat him except upon a special day with special rites. They were bound like most farmer-people to their past. How came such folk to leap suddenly into the very van of progress?

The explanation is simple. Their way of life had been rudely changed. They had broken with their past. The horrors of the enforced migration had swept it all away. Their old homes, and the oxen that were brothers, were far from them. The older folk, fathers and grandfathers, were not there to lay down the law. The women who teach the old things to generation after generation in infancy and childhood had been left behind. Instead there were foreigners of other speech and other gods—dangerous women, who,

perhaps, were slow to forgive the slaughter which they had witnessed of husbands, brothers, fathers, children, when the sea-wanderers came, and who bound themselves by oaths, and their daughters after them, like the Carian women of Miletus, "that they should never eat with their husbands, nor should a wife call her own husband by name, for this reason, because the Ionians had slain their fathers and husbands and children, and then having done this had them to wife." Euripides knew what they felt. His Andromache tells us. When the Greeks have seized her after the fall of Troy, she says to her fellow-captives, while they wait to be driven on board the ships that are to carry them away to slavery in exile:

"Achilles' son
So soon as I was taken, for his thrall
Chose me. I shall do service in the hall
Of them that slew. . . . How? Shall I thrust aside
Hector's beloved face, and open wide
My heart to this new lord? Oh, I should stand
A traitor to the dead! And if my hand
And flesh shrink from him . . . lo, wrath and despite
O'er all the house, and I a slave!"

Trojan Women, 653-9 (Prof. Gilbert Murray).

And Hecuba, the aged queen, earlier in the play, has told in a few sad lines what slavery means to her:

"A slave that men drive before,
A woman that hath no home,
Weeping alone for her dead;
A low and bruised head,
And the glory struck therefrom."

Ibid., 140-3.

These women, too, had broken with their past. All things were new. They were learning another speech. Their very children were half foreigners, who spoke two languages. And to speak two languages well quickens the wits, as may be seen in America to-day. For there too are people in their millions of many races, and diverse speech, who have left home and country,

breaking with their past; driven, many of them, by the intolerance of governments, many by stress of poverty or unemployment, or by a leaping ambition to win a chance in life. There too the visitor from the old world is conscious that he is in the presence of a youthful race, curious, restless, adaptable, inventive, to whom beckons a destiny perhaps as splendid as that which led the Greeks to their imperishable fame.

And among those old-time Achæan wanderers there were men of other races, with other gods and other customs. Nothing was stable: variety and change were everywhere and in everything. It was inevitable that men so placed should come to the same conclusion as Herodotus after his years of travel, "about the gods one man knows as much as another." All gods were much alike to these people. Each land had its own. Born here you believed one thing, born there another. These things were not worth quarrelling about. They did not matter. What did matter was that the mind should be free to inquire into everything that presented itself, and that it should search honestly by sound laws of thought for truth. So they became very tolerant of the beliefs of others and did not call those who differed from them heretics or infidels. And they began to ask shrewd questions about their own religion, and to laugh a little at the tales that were told of the doings of their gods. These gods were far too much like men. In the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* there is not much faith in them, or much respect for them. They play mean tricks; they can be cruel; they can be dishonourable and cheat and lie. The intelligent Ionian had no patience with a religion that owned such gods as these. He realised as clearly as Voltaire¹ that man had made God in his own likeness. It was an outrage to believe,

¹ As Voltaire wittily put it, "God first made man in His own likeness, and man has been returning the compliment ever since."

as even the Jews at one time believed, that God could claim a human sacrifice, and as the Greek had no sacred book, no bible, or priestly class, he was free to say so. "These tales," he said with Euripides—

These tales be lies, false as those feastings wild
Of Tantalus, and Gods that tore a child.
This land of murderers to its god hath given
Its own lust; evil dwelleth not in heaven.

Iphigenia in Tauris, 386-90 (Prof. Gilbert Murray).

And again:

Say not there be adulterers in heaven,
Nor prisoner gods and gaoler, Long ago
My heart has known it false and will not alter,
God, if he be God, lacketh naught. All these
Are dead unhappy tales of minstrelsy.

Heracles, 1341-6 (Prof. Gilbert Murray).

With Plato, but centuries before Plato or Euripides were born, he felt that "God is never in any way unrighteous—he is perfect righteousness; and he of us who is most righteous is most like him."

There were other things with which the Ionians had no patience. One was an old-fashioned system of land tenure which wise men among them had long known to be out of date. The land did not belong to any individual landlord, nor did it belong to the state. There was no buying or selling, no letting or hiring of land. It was parcelled out among the different families who made up the tribe. Each group of kinsmen had its block of land. They owned it in common—with the dead for partners. Indeed it belonged to the dead more than to the living. It was their abiding home. There they were buried, and there upon a Day of All Souls in April¹ the offerings were made—the soul cakes or the pots of seeds—which kept the restless ghosts

¹ Allhallow Even—recalling similar customs—on 31 October, is in America a children's festival now, not unlike our Fifth of November.

from troubling their kin. The living used the land for their own needs, but they could never sell it, or let it go out of the family. They could not even use it as they liked. The head of the family was master. His sons and grandsons, his uncles, his brothers, and his nephews, obeyed him. He saw to it that the crops were sown and reaped in the old way, with the old ceremonies. There was no breaking away from old customs, no introducing of newer methods, no scope for youthful independence, for originality or inventiveness. The land must be farmed as it had always been farmed. One can imagine how a young man would chafe at the rule of custom. "If only," we can hear him saying,—“If only I could have a piece of land of my own, how I would improve it! I would work early and late, and it should yield as much again as it yields now.” There would be many young men who wanted to escape from the rule of the family, and to reform the land system. When the invasions came, and they fled beyond the sea to Ionia, they had their chance. At last they were their own masters. There were no dead; there were no heads of families to tyrannise. They owned their holdings, and the land bore such crops as they had never seen before. What they had done in Ionia would soon be talked about in Greece. There was a party of progress, and gradually communism disappeared in favour of individual ownership. Nowadays, strangely enough, there are people who want to go back to communism, forgetting the teaching of history. They would make the land yield less food, when we all want more. It has been so in Russia, and millions have died of famine. Whatever may be the faults of capitalism—and certainly it has much to answer for, like most human institutions—it has made almost meaningless that petition in the Litany for deliverance from plague, pestilence and

famine which once came full of meaning from men's anxious hearts.

But great changes seldom come singly. The Greeks of the homeland were not yet city folk; they lived in scattered villages. In Ionia, however, the little groups of settlers were surrounded by enemies, and they dared not scatter. They dwelt together for mutual protection, and as soon as might be they fenced themselves about with walls. This was the origin of the Greek city state. The

little town by river or sea-shore
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,

had begun almost always as a fortress, a ring wall of stone round some rocky eminence, a wall which the colonists, "men of diverse tongues and worship united by a tremendous need, had built up to be the one barrier between themselves and a world of enemies"—[Murray, *Rise of the Greek Epic*, p. 79]. They had left behind them all that was dear to them, all the old and holy things that were rooted in their being, and their desolate hearts needed some new object on which to lavish their devotion. They found it in their city. She became "a sort of Mother-Goddess" to them, and thenceforth they worshipped her, and loved her, with a passion that we hardly understand; and their hearts would leap to hear the poet sing of her as Pindar the Theban, centuries later, sang of Athens, when she had saved Greece from the Persian, and, like the Elizabethans after the defeat of the Armada, had burst into an ecstasy of inspired song:

O shining, violet-crowned City of Song, great
Athens, bulwark of Hellas, walls divine.

But the Greek loved his city so passionately that he had no room in his heart for Hellas. It was both home

and country to him. The larger patriotism that would have drawn all Hellenes together as one people he never knew, except for a brief moment when the Persian came. But no age ever attains to the vision of its noblest spirits. The world one day will marvel at the narrow patriotism that in Europe could not overleap our national boundaries, or rise to a conception of the brotherhood of man and the impossible iniquity of war.

In our days farmers do not live in cities: in early Greece they did, and many a mile the town-dweller would trudge each day to and from his fields. But, though the women still spun the wool and wove the cloth for the family wear, trades and crafts were developing and many of the citizens would be engaged in commerce and industry. There were merchants, shopkeepers, tanners, potters, masons, sculptors, smiths, and so forth, following their trades or crafts at home; and everywhere sailors. They made things, sold things, carried things. There were no class distinctions in these early days. "Work was no reproach." One man did not think more of himself than another by reason of his occupation. The doctor, the poet, the orator, were no higher in the social scale than the potter or the leather-seller. Socrates himself was a stone-mason. There was social equality, as there is in America, and must always be in new countries. There was not even a rich man's quarter in Athens. And every man in time of need became a soldier. It was a matter of course—it startled nobody—to hear Electra say, addressing the body of the dead Ægisthus:

"And then the lie of lies that dimmed thy brow,
Vaunting that by thy gold, thy chattels, Thou
Wert Something; which themselves are nothingness,
Shadows, to clasp a moment ere they cease.
The thing thou art, and not the things thou hast,
Abideth, yea, and bindeth to the last

Thy burden on thee: while all else, ill-won
And sin-companioned, like a flower o'erblown,
Flies on the wind away."

EURIPIDES, *Electra*, 938-44 (Prof. Gilbert Murray).

The Greek knew that this social equality was not to be found in other countries. Herodotus saw "that Thracians, Skythians, Persians, Lydians, and nearly all foreigners, have less esteem for those citizens who learn trades and for their children than for others, and count as honourable those who are free of artisan work with the hands, and particularly those who are free to practise war"—[ii. 167 (Godley)]. But he noticed with regret that the Greeks, and especially the Lacedæmonians, were beginning to look down upon the hand-worker, and to glorify the soldier, were in fact becoming "snobs." By the fourth century the Athenians themselves were as bad as the foreigners, and regarded all forms of handicraft as contemptible. We are only slowly escaping from the same tradition, a tradition which America, like other young countries, has never known.

Wealth increased in these Ionian cities beyond the wildest dreams of farmer-folk, and with it, of course, as always, the population grew by leaps and bounds. The tribal kings of Greece followed the lead that Ionia had given. They encouraged the development of city life. There was money in it. But they were not long in finding that city life and absolute monarchy do not agree together, for "the city teaches men," as a Greek poet said. Town wits are quick. There is much talk. Meetings are held. The people have their own ideas, new ideas, about affairs of state, and their management, and before long there is a clash of wills; and the will of the many prevails over the will of the one or the few. Monarchy (the rule of one) and oligarchy (the rule of the few) disappear, and democracy (the

mastery of the people) takes their place. Then the democrats, being inexperienced, make a muddle of things, and one man, wise and strong and unselfish (or so it is hoped), is called upon to restore order. He does so, and for a time all is well. Those who succeed him, however, his son and his grandson, may have neither strength nor wisdom nor unselfishness, and after a generation or two the government once more becomes democratic. So Tennyson makes the blind Teiresias say:

"Who ever turn'd upon his heel to hear
My warning that the tyranny of one
Was prelude to the tyranny of all?
My counsel that the tyranny of all
Led backward to the tyranny of one?"

For even democracy can be tyrannical. France found that out at the time of the Revolution, and for remedy made Napoleon emperor: Russia is discovering it to-day. Athens knew it well. "A fine sort of government yours is, O Sovereign people," said the comic poet Aristophanes. "Why, no tyrant autocrat was ever dreaded more!"

Through all history there has been this continuous seesaw of methods, and there is no reason to suppose that we have come to the end of it yet. Modern institutions have no more permanence about them than those of earlier days. They too will suffer change and disappear.

Yet in the heart of the Greek there was always a passionate devotion to freedom and to justice. He was never at his best when freedom was lost. Just as Wordsworth at the beginning of last century said:

We must be free or die who speak the tongue
That Shakespeare spoke; the faith and morals hold
Which Milton held:

so Herodotus wrote: "It is proved not by one but by many instances what a good thing is equality

among men; for while they were under despotic rulers the Athenians were no better in war than any of their neighbours, yet once they got quit of despots they were far and away the first of all"—[v. 78].

The Ionian colonists prospered, and before many generations had passed the new cities were swarming like so many hives of bees. Their populations grew beyond the power of the settlements to feed or contain them. There were young men who could get neither land nor work, and for whom there was no future at home, and, what was worse, no food. States made no grants in those days to their unemployed. They had the same problem to deal with as we have—more people than the country has room for—but they dealt with it in another way. The world was young then, and things were possible which are accounted impossible now. Men never knew from year to year that there would be enough food to go round. There must not be too many mouths, and every man must be physically fit. There was no room for those who were defective. They were exposed at birth and left to die. So too were many girl babies. The city had no use for unmarried women, and there were not men enough to go round in days of ceaseless war. But in this swarming time the customary checks upon the growth of population were altogether insufficient. There was nothing for it but to seek fresh homes for the superfluous numbers. There were still wide spaces not fully occupied; so prompted and directed by the Oracle of Apollo at Delphi, which had the best and latest information and advice on every matter of human interest, they encouraged emigration. There were men too, young democrats or oligarchs, who did not like the government, or whom the government did not like, and who were therefore glad to get away: others were moved by the spirit of adventure to seek a new home. A leader

was found; ships were gathered; and a little party would sail off to some point of vantage of which they had heard from Apollo. And he—how did he know? Well, folk resorted from far and wide to his famous temple: no other spot in Greece received so many travelled pilgrims, and all left behind them their mite of information to swell the encyclopædic store of knowledge amassed through many generations by the priests. Miletus alone is said to have founded sixty colonies, many of them round the shores of the Black Sea, in the rich corn-lands that in later centuries were to be to Athens such a granary as Canada is to us, a source of food without which her people could not have lived and multiplied. Then the colonies swarmed, and for two or three busy centuries Greek colonists from many cities (for what was going on in Miletus was going on in a number of other cities, too, in Greece as well as in Ionia) were establishing themselves in every part of the Mediterranean. "The wet ways of the sea" were their high-road. They had founded a greater Greece in the south of Italy: they disputed Sicily with the Carthaginian, himself a Phœnician who, unlike his ancestors, became an empire-builder; and they established themselves at points on the northern coast of Africa, and so far away as Marseilles and the eastern coast of Spain. And wherever they went they spread the fame of the Greek hoplite—the mail-clad spearman. A ship of Samos commanded by a great merchant venturer had even sailed before the steady east wind, for which Nelson sighed in 1805, past the Pillars of Hercules. Guided by divine providence (so said Herodotus) the Samians discovered the silver mines of Tartessus or Tarshish (the modern Cadiz), the secret of which the Phœnicians had long guarded jealously, and brought home undreamed-of wealth.

But we must not deceive ourselves. What was wealth to the Greek would be poverty to us. Even in the very noonday of the glory of Athens in the fifth century, Euripides, the great tragedian, "lived on the island of Salamis in a cave which had two openings and a beautiful view"; and Professor Murray adds, "a good cave was probably more comfortable than many a Greek house." "We think of the Greeks," it has been said—[Zimmern, *The Greek Commonwealth*, p. 214]—"as the pioneers of civilisation, and unconsciously credit them with the material blessings and comforts in which we moderns have been taught, and are trying to teach Asiatics and Africans, to think that civilisation consists. We forget that they were more innocent of most of these than the up-country Greeks of to-day, or than most Englishmen were before the Industrial Revolution. It is easy to think away railways and telegraphs and gasworks and tea and advertisements and bananas. But we must peel off far more than this. We must imagine houses without drains, beds without sheets or springs, rooms as cold, or as hot, as the open air, only draughtier, meals that began and ended with pudding, and cities that could boast neither gentry nor millionaires. We must learn to tell the time without watches, to cross rivers without bridges, and seas without a compass, to fasten our clothes (or rather our two pieces of cloth) with two pins instead of rows of buttons, to wear our shoes or sandals without stockings, to warm ourselves over a pot of ashes, to judge open-air plays or lawsuits on a cold winter's morning, to study poetry without books, geography without maps, and politics without newspapers. In a word we must learn how to be civilised without being comfortable. Or rather we must learn to enjoy the society of people for whom comfort meant something very different from motor-cars and arm-

chairs, who, although or because they lived plainly and austere and sat at the table of life without expecting any dessert, saw more of the use and beauty and goodness of the few things which were vouchsafed them—their minds, their bodies, and Nature outside and around them. Greek literature, like the Gospels, 'is a great protest against the modern view that the really important thing is to be comfortable. The Comfort promised by the Gospels' (and that enjoyed by the Greeks, whether the same or somewhat different) 'and the comfort assured by modern inventions and appliances are as different as ideals can be.'"

As wealth increased so did poverty. To him that had was given: from him that had not was taken away even that which he had. The presence of the rich and the very poor side by side troubled the Greeks just as it troubles us. Each great invention, each new advance, is bought at the cost of unexpected suffering. Man is continually faced by the hard task of repairing disasters which have resulted from his greatest triumphs. The most serious social problems of to-day, unemployment, slum areas, labour unrest, and so forth, are all consequences of the harnessing of power—steam and electrical—to production. But you do not solve them by smashing machinery, like the earliest sufferers at the beginning of the nineteenth century, when a man's wages could not keep his family alive, and little children of five and six did the work of animals in the coal mines—and lived like them.

One of the great momentous discoveries of advancing civilisation was made in the seventh century B.C.—the discovery of the use of coined money. "Like the plough and the printing press, it was one of those simple inventions which, once discovered, humanity cannot imagine itself without." Yet its effect upon the poor

man was not unlike the effect of the introduction of machinery. It made it very hard for him to live, and for some generations there were frequent revolutions in the city states.

We have seen how the Lydians at Sardis became the chief power in Asia Minor when the Phrygians were overwhelmed. Their king, whom the Greeks called Gyges, and the Assyrians Gugu, acknowledged the King of Assyria as his overlord; but he allied himself with Psammetichus of Egypt, who was the enemy of Assyria, and as soon as he felt strong enough he began to force his way down towards the rich Ionian cities by the sea. Some that lay inland up the river valleys fell into his hands, if only temporarily; but Smyrna and Miletus defied him. Their walls were too strong for him, and it was impossible to compel them to surrender by blockade, because they could always be provisioned by their fleets. Moreover, though he would have liked to be their master, he could not afford to ruin them, for his wealth and prosperity depended upon theirs. Sardis, his capital, stood upon the great road that ran eastward to Nineveh and Babylon. East and West met there. The Greek traders fetched the eastern products from Sardis, and shipped them all over the Mediterranean and the Black Sea; and they carried back to Sardis the western products against which they had been exchanged, to be loaded on to the caravans which would transport them to the far East.

The Lydians were a people of merchants, and they owed their power largely to their wealth in the precious metal electrum, a natural mixture of gold and silver that was found in the Lydian mines, and in the sands of their river, Pactolus. To them, early in the seventh century, seems to have occurred the idea of striking and using coins of a certain standard of purity and

weight as a medium of exchange. The use of coined money simplified all business dealings so greatly that it spread rapidly throughout the Mediterranean. Men "grew tired of the tedious job of calculating the exact value of a serving-woman in ploughing oxen, or of a suit of armour in mules, and of eking out any deficiency with some handy lump of bullion which had to be weighed first in the scales"—[Zimmern, *Greek Commonwealth*, p. 302]. The clever, quick-witted trader who used the new method of doing business would have finished many a deal, each with a handsome profit, before the man of the Old World, with his ponderous method of adding up oxen and fractions of oxen, and weighing lumps which he had sawed off from his bars of gold, had concluded his first bargain.

Before long each city state coined its own money, and, knowing no better, sought with fatal greed to make a profit out of the operation. They adulterated the coinage, yielding to a temptation which has been too strong for many a government since. They would increase the percentage of silver in a gold coin, or of lead or copper in a silver coin, and pocket the difference as their profit. The result was that it soon became as difficult for the general public to know what goods were worth in terms of money, as it was after the war in Germany, where the value of the paper money fell at times in 1923 by a hundred, and even five hundred, per cent. in a single week. The professional trader of course made it his business to know something of the value of the coinage in which he was dealing, and he used his knowledge to his own advantage. Towns and traders piled up wealth, and did not mind who suffered. They had entered upon a reckless race for riches. The story of that race has been retold many times in history, and in many places, since first Theognis, the poet of Megara, lamented early in the sixth century that

There is no limit of wealth established among mortals; for those of us who have most riches redouble the pursuit. Who could sate all? Money is becoming a craze among mortals. And from this craze ruin is arising, and when that is sent by Zeus to weary men now one is involved and now another.

The landowner and the peasant fared badly. The peasant had to pay for all that he wanted in money instead of produce, but he knew nothing of the new values, and he was robbed both when he sold and when he bought. For instead of exchanging corn and oil and wine for goods and work—a leisurely business which he thoroughly understood—he had to go to one hustling middleman to sell his stuff for money, and to another to buy for his needs. Both traded on his ignorance. What they sold, they sold dear; what they bought, they bought cheap. The bad money made things worse, for the cunning dealers pretended that it was worth much less than it really was when he used it to pay them, and that it was worth much more than it really was when they paid him. At every turn they robbed him, and the small margin of profit, which in the past had sufficed to keep him and his family from want, went into their pockets. He had to borrow, and when a bad season came, and perhaps a second, and he could not pay the interest on the loan, the lender took his land, and, worse still, took him and his family for slaves.

The unhappy debt-slave, the victim of this great seventh-century discovery, appeared in Rome and Israel as well as in Hellas. In Israel too "they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes"—[Amos ii. 6]. These ruined men grew reckless. They had nothing to lose. Revolution was in the air. All confidence was lost. Those who saved anything hoarded it. Nobody would lend. Of course there was a severe set-back to trade, as there always is when states are dishonest, and men do not know what money is worth,

or how long they will be able to call what they have their own. Nobody would any longer venture his capital in industry. It did not take very long for the wiser and more observant men of business to learn their lesson, a lesson to which Demosthenes, the great orator and speech-writer, gave pointed expression in the fourth century B.C. "If," he said, "a man is really and truly ignorant that confidence is the best capital for commercial enterprise, he must be ignorant of everything." The more progressive states (Athens among them) reformed their coinage, and before long they were the great commercial centres. Honesty paid, as it always does in the long run. But because men of business and politicians are wont to belittle the importance of the study of history, and above all of ancient history, that and many other lessons have to be taught and retaught again and again by dearly bought experience. There are politicians in many parts of the world to-day (they are not unknown in England) who will not accept the old truth that the Greeks had mastered two thousand five hundred years ago.

CHAPTER V

THE TYRANTS

THESE were unhappy times for the little Greek cities. In the old Homeric days, before the development of city life, while the people dwelt scattered over villages, kings, who were the fathers of their people, bare rule over them. Written laws there were none, and the only judges, as among savage tribes to-day, were the village elders, those heads of families whom we have already met (p. 52). These men knew the ancient customs of the tribe, and when need arose they sat in leisurely council to declare them, and to judge between man and man. Homer gives us a picture of them at their work:

In the assembly were there people gathered: and a dispute had arisen there, and two men were contending about the quit-money for a slain man. The one affirmed that he had paid all, . . . but the other denied that he had received aught: and both were eager to get a decision before a judge. But the people applauded both, taking each one side: and the heralds were keeping back the people. And the elders sat on smooth stones in a sacred circle, and they held in their hands the staves of the loud-voiced heralds: with these then rose they up quickly, and in turn gave judgment.

Iliad, xviii. 497 (Hailstone).

It is a picture that carries us a long way back, or, perhaps it would be more true to say, a long way off; for in many parts of the world savages do the same things to-day in their sacred circles, sitting on time-honoured seats. Justice, a rude justice, is done: custom, which is the only law, is obeyed.

But in the troubled times that followed the great migrations, custom lost its hold upon the people. There had been too many changes; there were too many strangers about for whom the old customs had no sanctity; who did not know them, or had different customs of their own. The way of life was changing; for instead of the little groups of tribesmen living in scattered villages, we have the city, the place of refuge, to which flocks a mixed folk, as diverse in origin as that now flocking to America, a folk not yet bound together by any common bond. Ordered government there was none. Since the great migrations, kings—kings of tribes and villages—had lost their power, and groups of nobles had taken their place. Monarchy had been replaced by oligarchy, a change which is never to the advantage of the common folk, as our own history may teach us. When kings were weak, and the barons did what they pleased, the people suffered. It was the same in Greece. So about 600 B.C. it came to pass, as Solon tells us, that “of the poor many are going off to foreign lands, bound fast in cruel bonds and sold as slaves: thus does the trouble of the state come home to each man.”

In truth the people had not yet learned how to live together in cities, how to give and take, to deal honestly, and work together without distinction of class for the common good. Their market-places were notorious among foreigners as places where men perjured themselves and cheated one another. The people had a reputation for jealousy, quarrelsomeness and disunion. Hesiod, in the ninth century B.C., knew it only too well. “Potter,” he says, “has ill-will at potter, carpenter at carpenter; beggar is jealous of beggar, and minstrel of minstrel”—[*Works and Days*, 25]. Three hundred and fifty years later it was still very much the same. “If one citizen prosper,” says Herodo-

tus, through the mouth of Xerxes, “another citizen is jealous of him . . . and no one (except he have attained to the height of excellence; and such are seldom seen), if his own townsman asks for counsel, will give him what he deems the best advice”—[vii. 237]. And in the same way city was always jealous of city. There was still much ignorance and narrow-mindedness. The Greek peasant of the Persian wars, says Professor Murray, “did not read or think. He more or less hated the next village and regarded its misfortunes as his own advantage”—[*Euripides*, p. 47]. Not even at the crisis of their fate, when the Persian came, could the Greek cities agree to submit themselves to a single general. “You have many that lead, but none that will follow,” said the Sicilian tyrant who offered to help them with all his resources, if they would accept him as sole commander. “Every five Greeks, six commanders,” was a Venetian proverb two thousand years later. That way lies disaster, and Greece, too much the democrat, could not in the end escape it. But the day of democracy was not yet. All was ill-will, and power was in the hands of those who profited by the sufferings of the people. No wonder that the little cities were seething with discontent, or that revolution was in the air.

Religion will sometimes bind people together and put a love of justice in their hearts. It had done its best in Greece, but it had failed. Religion meant many things to the early Greeks, and they did not all of them agree. Zeus and Apollo and Athene, and all the gods of Olympus, were upon their lips, but these were most of them the imported gods of the conquerors, and festivals and ceremonies showed that the older faith of Mycenæan days was still in their hearts. So in Athens, where there had been less mixing of the races than anywhere, and many old things had survived,

the ox was killed and brought to life again, and the gifts of food were put out for the ghosts of ancestors; and so at Delphi, where from time immemorial a sacred snake had had his dwelling—the earth spirit, earliest of all gods, parent of that old serpent, the devil, of our forefathers—men went to the oracle of Apollo, as they went to the Witch of Endor, to inquire what was the will of Heaven when they were in doubt. But under old forms—for men are very slow to discard old forms and words and ceremonies of religion, though perhaps long out of date—a new spirit was developing in Greece, as it is developing to-day; for religion is dead when it ceases to grow with the growing mind and knowledge of man. Myth tells us of the killing of many of these snakes. It is, perhaps, a way of saying that the old outworn practices and beliefs were put down by prehistoric Luthers, earliest champions of a reformed religion. But the snake at Delphi lived on as a plaything and a pet, where once he had been the god, and “the word of the Lord” was declared by a priestess, the Pythia, who took her name from him and who sat within the temple upon a three-legged stool (the tripod) over the crack in the ground where once he had his dwelling. Seated there she waited for the inspiration that would descend upon her (what you believe will happen, will happen—for you). Then in the moment of possession wild words came from her, with cries and pain, and a priest-interpreter would take down what he thought she said, which would, perhaps, be what he expected her to say, and presently the inquirer would have his answer given him in lines of verse.

People will not long go on consulting a god whose word is foolishness, and from whom they get no help. In the seventh century Delphi gave men help. The priests who controlled the oracle were wise, far-seeing

and great-hearted men. All who came to inquire saw inscribed above the entrance to the temple the counsel “Know Thyself”—the first lesson in intellectual and moral honesty to-day as it was then. The priests made it their business to gather wise teaching, and to get knowledge of men and affairs in all lands to which Greek travellers were penetrating, and from all foreigners who came to Delphi. No Foreign Office knew more of the outer world. Yet famous though their wisdom was, no one knows who these priests were. “The very names of these early prophets have passed away. They were content to cast their work upon Apollo, as the bards were content to cast theirs upon Homer. Yet prophets there must have been as truly inspired as those of Israel”—[Zimmern, *The Greek Commonwealth*, p. 123]. And, of course, there are prophets to-day, though, as always, they go unacknowledged and unrecognised in their own generation.

From far and wide men came to Delphi, bringing rich gifts that they might learn of the wisdom of the god. Even Cræsus, the Lydian, would send from far-off Sardis to inquire before he set his armies in motion against Cyrus and his Persians, and he was told that if he marched he would destroy a mighty empire, a riddling answer of a type that in later days the oracle much favoured. But in the seventh century it would give a lead that no man could mistake. So it taught men to seek knowledge, and to be honest with themselves and others, and preached gentleness and self-control in a world that was torn by violence and selfishness. It was under its guidance, too, that the cities sent out their companies of young adventurers to found new colonies throughout the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

But though education and religion can do much to amend human frailty, they need the help of laws, and

judges, and the strong arm of settled governments. High principles are apt to be ineffective if there is no power to enforce respect for them, whether between man and man, or nation and nation. And so it was in Greece. Therefore the folk looked for leaders. The times were not yet ripe for democracy. Some strong man and just they wanted, who would displace the greedy nobles and govern them for their good. So they took to themselves the "tyrants," committing all power into their hands. This name, soon to be so odious (a foreign, perhaps a Lydian, name), had no unkindly sound when first it was heard in Hellas. The earliest tyrants, like the earliest Star Chamber of our Henry VII., were popular, because they protected the mass of the people against the violence and lawlessness of the noble families and their followers. They did justice and kept the peace. They seem, many of them, to have been men who had gained wealth as traders, manufacturers, contractors, financiers. They were sensible business men, who would stand no nonsense from riotous young nobles, and by fair speeches and attractive promises they made themselves popular with the poor folk. For they were demagogues, like any Soviet leader, before, in his fashion too, they suppressed all opinions but their own. But if they won their power by their trick of speech, they held it because their earliest acts convinced the people that they were the best rulers that they could hope for, or indeed wish for, in those times. Their wealth enabled them to confer great public benefits on their cities. They beautified them by building splendid temples, and they raised the standard of living by attending, as no government had dreamed of attending before, to public needs. Good water is one of the greatest of public needs. Greek cities seldom had it. Tyrant after tyrant provided it. The famous Polykrates, who, after making

a fortune in trade, became tyrant of Samos about 540 B.C., drove a tunnel 1100 feet long, the remains of which can still be seen, through a hill, in order to bring water from a spring beyond it into the city. He also protected the harbour of this city of merchant venturers by constructing a mole round it in deep water; and he built a splendid temple, which, said the far-travelled Herodotus, who knew all the glory of Athens in the days of her prime, "is the greatest that I have seen." His work is typical of his kind. By the judicious use of capital they encouraged manufactures and agriculture. They would import finer breeds of sheep to improve the wool, or they would raise the standard of craftsmanship by taking some famous craftsman into their employ, or again they would develop foreign trade by making alliances with other cities, or by founding colonies. They reformed or improved the coinage, prohibited extravagant living, dealt with some of the abuses of slavery, and generally cleared up the muddles and removed the unhappiness left by the time of disorder through which the cities had passed. And everywhere they were patrons of art and literature, just as were the despots of mediæval Italy two thousand years later.

Only strong governments can do such work as this. It is the kind of work which for forty years England has done in Egypt. She put down internal disorder with a strong arm, she protected the country from invasion by the dervishes of the Soudan, and then freed the Soudan itself from their ferocious and bloody rule. She introduced into both countries clean English methods of administration and justice, and swept out of public offices the methods of bribery and intimidation, of arbitrary imprisonment and torture and extortion, which put personal liberty, and property, and life itself, at constant risk. Poverty and misery have been

succeeded by the abounding prosperity that attends upon industry in a very fertile land when life and property are secure. And gratitude? Content? No; it is never so. The generation that knew the sufferings of the earlier time is more than content, but its children begin to ask questions. They want to know why these foreigners should be their masters; why they may not govern themselves. Gratitude for public services does not long endure. It was the same in Greece; and in Greece there was a tradition, and a deep-rooted love, of freedom, that Egypt in all the thousands of years of its history has never known. The reign of the tyrants could not possibly last long. Two or three generations generally saw the end of it.

Though many of the founders of the short-lived dynasties may have ruled with a single eye to the public good, their successors, brought up not as traders or manufacturers in the school of hard work, but as princes, above the law, in the school of luxury and flattery, developed the qualities that gave to the name of tyrant the hateful meaning that has attached to it ever since. They feared for their power and their lives, and they imprisoned or banished or killed those whom they suspected of hostility towards them, or thought likely to be dangerous.

There cannot for long be good government, as Herodotus said, "when the ruler can do what he will, and not be held to account for it"—[iii. 80]. "He turns the laws of the land upside-down . . . and puts men to death without trial," he adds later in the same chapter. It took Magna Carta and the Petition of Right and the Habeas Corpus Act, and a long civil war and the revolution of 1688—450 years of slow political development—to win for Englishmen the personal security under the protection of the law which the Athenian enjoyed in the fifth century B.C.

Even the founder of the dynasty might adopt methods of violence. Herodotus has a famous story of the tyrants of Corinth—a story that recurs in Roman history.

Kypselus [he says], having gained despotic power, bore himself in this wise: many Corinthians he banished, many he robbed of their goods, and by far the most of their lives. He reigned for thirty years¹ and made a good ending of his life; and his son Periander succeeded to his despotic power. Now Periander at the first was of milder mood than his father; but after he had held converse by his messengers with Thrasybulus, the despot of Miletus, he became much more bloodthirsty than Kypselus. For he sent a herald to Thrasybulus and inquired how he should most safely so order all matters as best to govern his city. Thrasybulus led the man who had come from Periander outside the town, and entered into a sown field; where, while he walked through the corn and plied the herald with still-repeated questions anent his coming from Corinth, he would ever cut off the tallest that he saw of the stalks, and cast away what he cut off, till by so doing he had destroyed the best and richest of the crop; then, having passed through the place and spoken no word of counsel, he sent the herald away. When the herald returned to Corinth, Periander was desirous to hear what counsel he brought; but the man said that Thrasybulus had given him none, "and that is a strange man," quoth he, "to whom you sent me; for he is a madman and a destroyer of his own possessions," telling Periander what he had seen Thrasybulus do. But Periander understood what had been done, and perceived that Thrasybulus had counselled him to slay those of his townsmen who stood highest; and with that he began to deal very evilly with his citizens. For whatever act of slaughter or banishment Kypselus had left undone, that did Periander bring to accomplishment."

v. 92 (Godley).

Of course no people who in their hearts loved freedom, as the Greeks did, could submit for long to a government of this description, however much they were indebted to it for material prosperity. The tyrants were the unconscious forerunners of popular government. By the time their rule had ended, their cities were ready for a great experiment in democracy—an

¹ 655-25 B.C.

experiment in its issue at once brilliant and disastrous, for power drifted more and more into the hands of the ignorant, who will insist in defiance of plain facts that all men are equal, until even the boisterous demagogue Kleon, a typical product of democracy going fast downhill, was constrained to tell the Athenian Assembly that "a democracy cannot govern an empire," and Alkibiades could speak of it a little later as "an acknowledged insanity." Yet, but a generation earlier, while Athens still trusted Perikles, her ablest man, one who disdained to bid for power by making promises, Herodotus had said enthusiastically, "its very name is beautiful, isonomia—equality before the law"—[iii. 80]. So difficult and dangerous is the pursuit of one of the highest of political ideals, self-government.

The problems of the Greek were our problems. We are only finding out again what he found out, taught either by experience or by his swift, keen intellect. "Do not be misled," said Kleon, "by the three most deadly enemies of empire, pity and charm of words, and the generosity of strength"—[Thucydides, iii. 40]—advice that must be taken into account to-day by an imperial people whose trade requires that they shall keep safe the ocean communications of the world.

Was Kleon wrong when he said that a democracy cannot govern an empire? It has still to be proved. As for Athens, democracy made her name immortal and—ruined her.

Some cities put off the day of the tyrant, and for a time—though only for a time—succeeded by other means in their battle with disorder. Miletus, the chief ornament of Ionia, as Herodotus calls her, even established what one might call a government of business men to grapple with the economic and political troubles which disturbed life there as everywhere else.

For two generations [says Herodotus], she had been very greatly troubled by faction, till the Parians made peace among them, being chosen out of all the Greeks by the Milesians to be peace-makers. The Parians reconciled them in this manner: Their best men came to Miletus, and seeing the Milesian households sadly wasted, said that they desired to go about their country. Doing this, and visiting all the territory of Miletus, whenever they found any well-tilled farm in the desolation of the land, they wrote down the name of the owner of that farm. Then, having travelled over the whole country and found but few such men, no sooner had they returned to the city than they assembled the people and appointed as rulers of the state those whose lands they had found well tilled; for these (they said) were like to take as good care of public affairs as they had of their own; and they ordained that the rest of the Milesians who had been at feud should obey these men.

v. 28, 29 (Godley).

The experiment, no doubt, gave them good government for a time, but before very long the tyrant became necessary, and Miletus was in the hands of Thrasybulus, who raised the city to the very height of its power, but who left a name behind him as a finished master of all the evil arts by which autocrats contrive to fence about their thrones.

The fortunes of Miletus and her sister cities are not without significance to-day. History is continually repeating itself. Factious divisions, continual quarrelling and neglect of work would have the same consequences now as they had in Greece. No country can be either happy or prosperous where there are not good-will and hard work.

Athens suffered as much from disorder as any other city. The different parties were quarrelling fiercely over the form which the government should take, and it was impossible for them to agree upon any measures for the relief of distress. There were those who had, and those who had not, as now; and they had not yet learned that neither party could get on without the other, and that if the state were to prosper both

must pull together. The unhappy debt-slaves could endure their wrongs no longer. Their temper was dangerous, and they were bent on desperate measures.

All the people [says Plutarch] were indebted to the rich; and either they tilled their land for their creditors, paying them a sixth part of the increase, . . . or else they engaged their body for the debt, and might be seized, and either sent into slavery at home, or sold to strangers; some (for no law forbade it) were forced to sell their children, or fly their country to avoid the cruelty of their creditors; but the most part and the bravest of them began to combine together and encourage one another to stand to it, to choose a leader, to liberate the condemned debtors, divide the land, and change the government.

Then the wisest of the Athenians, perceiving Solon was of all men the only one not implicated in the troubles, that he had not joined in the exactions of the rich, and was not involved in the necessities of the poor, pressed him to succour the commonwealth, and compose the differences.

Solon (Clough).

So a year or two before 590 B.C., Solon was chosen chief magistrate, or archon. He himself belonged to one of the old noble families, but perhaps fortunately for the development of his character, his father had squandered his property, and Solon had to make his own way in the world. His friends would gladly have helped him, but he preferred to be independent, and while still a boy he took up a merchant's life. He travelled far on business, and became rich. But travel did more than win him wealth; it furnished his mind with knowledge and experience, and equipped him for the task that was to be laid upon him in later years. What he thought about things, and what he wanted to teach, he wrote in verse; for verse has always come before prose in the development of literature, and the day of prose had not yet dawned, though the dawn was at hand. He governed himself by the teaching of Delphi, making reason his guide, and was just and moderate and gentle. He examined his heart and

conscience, and asked himself what was his motive for wishing this, or doing that, until he really knew himself. We still do not know ourselves, and we continually lay claim to motives that are quite different from, and far more creditable to ourselves than, the real ones. Nor have we yet reached Solon's standard of moderation or fairness, as we show to all the world at every political meeting, and in our ungenerous talk about our opponents to whom we so often attribute dishonourable intentions for no better reason than that we dislike their opinions, which are commonly as honest as our own. Solon's qualities and the fame of his wisdom made men trust him and look to him in time of trouble. If he had wished to do so, he could have made himself tyrant, as men were doing in so many cities, but power had no temptations for him. His ambition was to serve. He would be a mediator between the rival parties, always a thankless task, for you please nobody. He would be neither demagogue who flatters the people, nor tyrant who uses them. He would work for the good of his fellow-citizens, and he wanted nothing for himself. Because he sympathised with all who suffered, and hated injustice, he was a reformer. But though he wanted to change bad customs and to make good laws, he was moderate in his reforms, for he was guided by reason, and not by undisciplined emotion. A favourite motto of his was "Avoid excess," or—as one might say—"Don't go too fast or too far." So, as Plutarch tells us, "when he was afterwards asked if he had left the Athenians the best laws that could be given, he replied, 'The best they could receive.'" Just so we, too, if we are wise, shall give India or Egypt, not the best laws that could be given, but the best they can receive, which will almost always be something quite different from what we ourselves want, because their history and

associations and traditions—and consequently their ideals and their methods—are so very different from ours. It is well to remember that India is really a continent, among whose many races there are differences of race and language as deep and all-dividing as among the peoples of Europe, and that not ten per cent. of them can read or write. And even we ourselves have not yet arrived at the best laws that could be given. Education will have to do more to amend man's nature before that can be. Man is always, like the weary Hercules,

Bound on the next new labour "height o'er height
Ever surmounting—destiny's decree!"

BROWNING, *Aristophanes' Apology*.

And however far he may advance in the long hereafter towards perfection, his ideals will advance also, and there will always be something not quite within his grasp that, if he is wise, he will leave his successors to achieve. For, as Tennyson makes Ulysses say:

All experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.

If we do not easily resign ourselves to the inevitable slowness of the pace of progress, we shall do well to remember that

Sight of narrow scope
Has this meek consolation: neither ills
We dread, nor joys we dare anticipate,
Perform to promise. Each soul sows a seed;
Seed bears crop, scarce within our little lives;
But germinates—perhaps enough to judge,—
Next year?

BROWNING, *Aristophanes' Apology*.

It is an old Greek saying that it is more important to form good habits than to frame good laws. One cause of division between classes was the luxury and display of the new rich, a class which had been suddenly

brought into existence by the invention of coined money. Solon, like the Spartan legislator Lycurgus, wanted rich and poor to look as much alike as possible; then they might begin to feel alike. So he would not allow any Athenian girl to have more than three dresses in her trousseau when she married, or to wear more than three articles of clothing when she walked abroad. He forbade the hiring of mourners at funerals, and the costly offering of an ox at the grave, and he would not permit more than three garments to be buried with the dead. He wanted to teach the habit of living simply, a habit which we should do well to try to acquire to-day.

Solon knew more than two thousand years before British statesmen once more discovered it, that crime is not abolished by severity of punishment. He repealed the laws of the earlier legislator Drako, because they were too severe, being written, as a wit said, "not with ink but blood." Death was Drako's punishment for those who stole so much as an apple or a cabbage. Solon did away with the barbarous folly, but we still persisted in it a hundred years ago, when the penalty for stealing a sheep, or anything of the value of forty shillings, was still death, and a very barbarous death in public, watched by thousands. With what grave propriety the death sentence was executed in Athens Plato's story of the death of Socrates reveals. Of course, if a man is to be hanged for stealing a sheep, it is obvious that he can suffer no more if he murders the man who sees him do it, or the officer of the law who tries to arrest him.

The sufferings of the unhappy debt-slaves Solon ended by his famous *Seisachtheia*, or "Shaking off of burdens," which cancelled all mortgages or debts for which a man had pledged his body as security. All who had been imprisoned or enslaved for debt were set

free, and Athenians who had been sold into slavery abroad were redeemed. They were put in possession once more of their little holdings; and because men will always work harder when they are their own masters than when they work for another, these smallholders "made their country famous, in spite of the poverty of its soil, as the best cultivated in Greece"—[Zimmern, *The Greek Commonwealth*, p. 134].

This measure, of course, angered the rich, who had to liberate the slaves and give back the land which they had seized as security for their loans; while the money they had lent was gone for ever. It did not, however, content the extreme section of the popular party, for they wanted all lands to be divided up among the people, and Solon would not do this. He saw plainly enough that that was no true remedy, for the old tale only begins again. Equality cannot endure where men's natural gifts are so unequal. Before long some will grow rich and some will grow poor, and you are none the better. Indeed, all are very much the worse, for confidence has been shaken, and there is no capital available for the development of business.

All these laws, and the many other laws that Solon made, were written down and carved upon pillars of stone, that were set up in public places in Athens, so that every man might know what the laws of his country really were, and might be able to claim their full protection. As Euripides said:

With written laws, the humblest in the state
Is sure of equal Justice with the great.

The Suppliant Women, 433 (Murray).

That is true if the laws can be enforced, and in the later days, when Euripides wrote, they were. Solon provided the earliest machinery for enforcing them, but, as we shall see, it was not immediately successful.

It would have been useless to make laws for the protection of the people, if their administration and interpretation were to be left in the hands of the champions of oligarchy. So Solon "formed the courts of law out of all the citizens, thus creating the democracy, which," adds Aristotle, "is the very reason why he is sometimes blamed." For by Aristotle's day there was no longer the enthusiasm for democracy that there was when Herodotus wrote. Too many terrible mistakes had been made, and Athens had learnt that, great as its benefits may be, if the people follow wise leading, it may do perhaps more mischief than any other form of government if an uninstructed people choose incompetent or fanatical leaders, and put impossible tasks upon them.

The making of the laws, like their interpretation, was also in the hands of the whole people, and Euripides, a little earlier in the play just quoted, could make one of his characters say proudly:

No will of one
Holdeth this land; it is a city and free.
The whole folk year by year, in parity
Of service, is our King.

Ibid., 404-7.

It was possible in little Attica, a country not half the size of Lancashire, though the largest of all the Greek states, for the whole folk to do themselves the legislative and judicial work, which in modern countries they do by deputy, through their elected members of parliament, and through the jurors who hear the evidence and declare the verdicts in the courts of law. It was the jurors who declared that the seven bishops had not offended against the laws of England, when they refused to read the Declaration of Indulgence and it was because of the share which the people through the jury had in interpreting the law, that James II. was not able to dispense with the Test Act.

and any other Act of Parliament that he did not like. And if twelve jurors can protect the laws in this way, still more effective was the protection in a city state like Athens, where all the people took their share in Assembly and law courts. In the fifth century no court consisted of less than 201 jurymen. When Socrates was condemned, no fewer than 501 voted. The tax upon the time of the citizens was considerable. Some of them lived far away in the country, and might have perhaps a four-hour tramp each way, starting and returning in the dark. But at this time they were still ready and proud to do the work.

But the humble may fear to set the law in motion against the great. To get over this difficulty Solon "allowed 'anyone who wished' to set on foot a prosecution for a criminal offence." The state did not prosecute then: therefore the sufferer must do it or some private citizen ("anyone who wished") on his behalf. Plutarch says that Solon wanted "to accustom the citizens, like members of the same body, to resent and be sensible of one another's injuries. And (he adds) 'there is a saying of his agreeable to his law, for, being asked what city was the best modelled, 'That,' said he, 'where those that are not injured try to punish the unjust as much as those that are.'"

The noble and the wealthy were not denied the right to hold office in the state, but Solon tried to make it impossible for them to abuse their power. If there was any doubt as to what the law was, or what it meant, there was an appeal to the people, who met in their thousands to decide. And lest the officials, who were elected annually, should use their positions improperly for private gain, or should twist the law to injure some political opponent or private enemy, each was required at the end of his year of office to give an account of his conduct before the Assembly,

and one can imagine the awkward questions that would be asked, and the hostility that he would have to face, if he was known to have done amiss. There were no permanent officials; no man was trained for his duties; and in later days no man could hold the same position twice, except in the army and upon the council. The number of citizens who shared in the work of office was therefore large. Then as now, those who were not in office were apt to criticise the actions of those who were, and the Athenians were very much alive to the steadying influence of responsibility.

There is no way to know of any man
The spirit and the wisdom and the will,
Till he stands proved, ruler and lawgiver.

Antigone, 175-7.

So Sophocles expanded the shrewd Athenian proverb, "Office tests a man."

Here was all the essential machinery of self-government. Athens, if she could work it, was launched upon her career as a democratic state. It was developed in this way and that by later legislators, but the main principles were maintained. At first, however, it would not work. Solon, having done his part, bought a trading vessel, and went abroad for ten years, hoping that by the time he returned the people might have become accustomed to the laws, and to the machinery for administering them. But that was not to be. When he came back all was in disorder. Nobody was satisfied. The different parties were quarrelling over the shares which the new laws gave them in the government, and wanted to amend them. The poor complained that the nobles had too many representatives: the nobles were angry at the loss of their power. Even the peasants who were re-established on their lands, free from the former load of debt and safe against enslavement, were dissatisfied. They could not stock their holdings with-

out capital; but they had no capital, and apparently no prospect of obtaining any, for the rich after the Seisachtheia were not going to advance more money. The repudiation of debts may at times be inevitable, but it is a desperate remedy, for naturally it shatters credit, and makes further borrowing difficult and costly.

Discontent grew until civil war seemed certain. The three parties would not sink their differences for the common good. There were the men of the Plain, the land-owning aristocrats who lived in the city or the surrounding lowlands; the men of the Shore, who were the seafaring population, many of them well-to-do and even rich, with the merchants at their head—a new middle or bourgeois class born of the wholesale and retail trade which the use of coined money had created; and the Hill men, the labour party of the day, who were the poorer folk. It has usually been supposed that these Hill men were in the main shepherds and smallholders; but the plausible suggestion has been made of late that they were miners, whose name in some languages still means hill men. Miners, we know, are always strong champions—even extreme champions—of democracy, who, as they live to a large extent in communities of their own, are apt—intelligent though they are—to take a sectional rather than a national view. These miners—if miners they were—were mining not coal but silver, in the district of Laureion in the south of Attica. Whether miners, or shepherds and smallholders, the Hill men were bitterly opposed to the parties of the Plain and the Shore—the nobles and the middle class—and were thoroughly dissatisfied with the reforms of Solon, which so far as they could see had done them very little good. They did not want votes in the Assembly and seats on juries. They did not yet understand the use of them. Constitutional methods appealed as little to them as to a modern

communist. They wanted improved conditions of life, and force seemed to be the only way of obtaining them, though in truth history has always shown that no way could possibly be worse than that.

The Hill men had numbers, but they lacked organisation. At this moment a very able and very wealthy man put himself at their head, and by their aid raised himself to power. This was Peisistratus. He seems to have made a vast fortune out of the rich mines of silver and gold that were then worked among the hills behind the modern Salonika, and he was probably interested also in the silver mines of Laureion. He made himself tyrant in 560 B.C., and the future greatness of Athens was largely due to the work he did, for whether as soldier, statesman, or man of business, he was pre-eminent in ability. He preserved the forms of Solon's constitution, and treated the old man himself with all respect. The Assembly still met; the officers of the state were elected each year; the people sat on their juries and did justice: but all went on under his supervision. His wealth enabled him to do what at the moment the mass of the people most needed. He could provide them with the capital that they must have if they were to make the most of their little farms. No doubt they supported him and put him in power because they knew that they could get what they wanted from him, and from no one else. It was his money that enabled them to plant the land with the olive, a tree of slow growth that does not yield a full crop until it has been planted nearly twenty years. The part played by the olive in the life of the Greek has been described by Mr. Zimmern in *The Greek Commonwealth*, pp. 51-2:

Olive oil [he says] to the Greeks played three separate rôles—those of butter, soap and gas. It was used for cooking, for washing, and for lighting. No one in Greece (outside

fashionable hotels at Athens) eats butter; bread and olives or bread and goats' cheese are their "bread and butter," and Herodotus thinks it necessary, for the information of his readers, to give a minute description of a Scythian butter-making, or literally "cow-cheese-making." Hence oil is used in almost every dish, and every Greek cook would be lost without it. Again, the Greeks used no soap, but rubbed themselves with oil and, if that was insufficient, put scents on above it. Lastly, if they outstayed the sun (which they did far less than we) they had no other light but oil or resinous torches. Hence the multitudes of oil-lamps in every classical museum. For each of these purposes thrifty housekeepers used a different quality of oil. The olives were squeezed in presses: the first squeeze produced eating oil, the second anointing oil, the third burning oil, and, finally, the remainder, skins and all, was used as fuel.

No wonder that the Attic peasantry long looked back to the rule of Peisistratus as to a time of great prosperity. They were never better off. The land question was not heard of again. Party strife died down, and the country enjoyed peace and prosperity.

Other distinguished services he did for Athens. He too, like other tyrants, brought spring water to his city, and he won for her from her rival Megara the island of Salamis, without which she could never have become a naval power, for it lay before her harbour and blocked her access to the sea. He also settled and fortified important positions on the Hellespont, the key to the Euxine or Black Sea, whence in later days her ships brought the corn that fed her busy industrial population, and enabled her to defy the Spartan occupation of her territory in the Peloponnesian War.

Like so many of the other tyrants, Peisistratus encouraged art and literature. To him is said to have been due the writing down and arranging of the Homeric poems. Poets, architects and sculptors flocked to his court, and worked under his direction to beautify Athens and enrich her intellectual life. The Medici in Florence, our English Tudors after the

disorders of the fifteenth century, Napoleon after the excesses of the French Revolution and the Terror, each did a very similar work. And we have not yet seen the last of "tyrants," beneficent or oppressive. But their rule, though many may be content with it because it brings material prosperity, seldom excites enthusiasm, and always alienates the men of independent mind.

Twice Peisistratus was driven into exile by the intrigues of the other parties, and once he was ten years away from Athens. His reverses, however, did not provoke him to violent measures. His rule was mild, and he was still tyrant of Athens when he died in 527 B.C. His sons Hippias and Hipparchus succeeded him, and all went well until 514, when the latter was assassinated by Harmodius and Aristogeiton, who suffered for their deed, and were immortalised as liberators by succeeding generations. After the murder of his brother, Hippias, fearing for his life, became a tyrant indeed, and adopted all the measures that made the name of tyrant hateful. For four years longer he maintained himself in Athens, but in 510 a rising, which was assisted by the Spartans, compelled him to withdraw. He went into exile, and before long he was at the court of Persia, scheming to procure his restoration by the help of foreign arms. For by this time the menace of Persia lay dark on the horizon. Greece, it was plain, would before long have to fight for freedom, or bow her neck to a foreign yoke.

In the twenty years which intervened between the expulsion of Hippias and the Battle of Marathon, Athens found herself. The advance was extraordinarily rapid. The day of democracy had come; she was ready to play the part of a self-governing community.

"Let there be light!" said Liberty;
And like sunrise from the sea
Athens arose.

SHELLEY, *Hellas*.

CHAPTER VI

THE COMING OF THE PERSIAN

WHEN the Greeks established themselves along the coast of Asia Minor, the Lydians must have been looking east and not west, or they would never have allowed those fertile lands to fall into the possession of another folk. There was, indeed, every reason why they should be looking eastward. For a thousand years and more first one eastern power and then another had let loose the scourge of war upon its neighbours, squeezing tribute out of them by force or fear. We have seen, however, (p. 61) that, in the early part of the seventh century, Gyges, the founder of a new dynasty of powerful sovereigns, was able to look westward and to turn his arms against the Greeks. More than a hundred years later, in the days of Cræsus, there was still, according to Herodotus, "no nation in Asia more valiant or warlike than the Lydian. It was their custom to fight on horseback, carrying long spears, and they were skilled in the management of horses"—[i. 79]. No ambitious conqueror at the head of troops like these could resist the temptation to make himself master of Ionia. Herodotus declared, as we have seen (p. 37 above), that the country had the finest climate of any that he knew. All others were too hot or too cold, too wet or too dry. But that richly favoured land can never be secure unless its inhabitants are masters also of the interior as the Turks are to-day. Some hardy upland race will always covet it. And unhappily the people who dwell in such a land always

lose by degrees the qualities that once enabled them to win it. They are no longer brave, hardy, resolute, enduring, as once they were. "Soft countries," said Cyrus the Persian, or so Herodotus was told, "invariably breed soft men, and it is impossible for one and the same country to produce splendid crops and good soldiers"—[ix. 122 (Rawlinson)]. After a few generations the people begin to think too much of wealth and ease, of the graces of life and things of the mind, to tolerate regular drill and barrack-room life and the hardships of campaigning. Once the Ionians had been warlike pirates, many of whom readily took service as professional soldiers with the warring sovereigns of the east. Now they were the most highly civilised and cultured people of their day. War was no longer a part of their daily life. If it came, it was a hateful necessity. Men must fight for their homes and their independence, but body and mind alike revolt against the horrors of war, in which the invader now revels as once they did themselves. So wave after wave of conquest has passed over that rich coast since then. Fire and sword have devastated its cities again and again. Lydian, Persian, Roman, Arab and Turk have all taken toll of them. For centuries the Turk has been their master, and Smyrna went up in flames once more, when in 1922 he descended from the uplands of the interior to sweep the Greek armies out of Asia Minor.

The history of India and Egypt has been much the same. Each successive conqueror has yielded to the softening influence of wealth and ease: each in turn has fallen before the untamed valour of some new invader fresh from the mountain or the desert, where men are poor and life is one long struggle against the harsh tyranny of Nature. And that is why one cannot be sure that even the League of Nations, to which tortured Europe desperately clings and must cling

for protection against the horrors of another war, will not at some terrible crisis prove ineffective. There are still untamed races in the world that think more of the prizes of war than they do of its horrors. An unarmed Europe might be an irresistible temptation to them.

For three generations after the death of Gyges, the Asiatic Greeks preserved their freedom, though at times they had to fight hard for it, and suffered many reverses. But a race of new and far mightier conquerors was approaching from the east, beyond Assyria. These were the Medes, a people near akin to the Persians, beneath whose sway they ultimately passed. They had thrown off the yoke of Assyria a century earlier, and now, in 612 B.C., in alliance with the Babylonians, they took Nineveh, and destroyed the last remnant of Assyria's power. The allies divided the Assyrian empire between them, and marched on to further conquests. Nebuchadnezzar drove the Egyptians out of Syria, stormed Jerusalem, and carried the Jews away into captivity, and then invaded Egypt. Assyria itself fell to the Medes, who under their King Kyaxares pushed their way through Asia Minor as far as the River Halys (the modern Kizil Irmak), which formed the eastern frontier of Lydia, and on 28 May, 585 B.C. fought a drawn battle with the Lydian Alyattes. It is very rarely that a date so exact can be given to any event that took place so long ago. But we are told that the battle was interrupted by a total eclipse of the sun; and that fact enables astronomers to fix the date. One other interesting fact is recorded. Thales of Miletus had predicted that there would be an eclipse that year. This does not mean that he had the modern astronomer's knowledge of the movements of the heavenly bodies. He had not. It is a mere matter of

observation that eclipses of the sun recur after a period of 223 lunar months. The Babylonians had discovered this cycle, which is called the Saros, and Thales perhaps had learnt it from them.

The terror of the eclipse—for the rare and unexpected eclipses of the sun terrify those who do not understand their cause—broke off the battle and led to peace. The Medes and Lydians became allies, and to confirm the alliance Astyages, the son of Kyaxares, married Aryenis, the daughter of Alyattes and sister of Cræsus.

With nothing to fear from the Medes, Cræsus, who succeeded his father Alyattes in 560 B.C., could once more turn his attention to the Greek cities on the coast. When Cræsus came to the throne all the Ionians, whatever they may have suffered from his predecessors, were still free. When he in his turn fell before Cyrus the Persian in 546 B.C., all were subject to him except Miletus, who had basely bought her liberty by standing neutral, while her sister cities were conquered one by one. Divided by the lie of the country, by their racial differences, and by the incurable reluctance of the Greeks to pursue a common policy, or to unite under a single leader, what chance had they of resisting with success this splendid master of undreamed-of wealth and many legions, whose position enabled him to strike at his pleasure now down this valley, now down that?

The first Greeks whom he attacked [says Herodotus] were the Ephesians. These, being besieged by him, dedicated their city to Artemis¹; this they did by attaching a rope to the city wall from the temple of the goddess, standing seven furlongs away from the ancient city, which was then being besieged. These were the first whom Cræsus attacked; afterwards he made war on the Ionian and Æolian cities in turn, each on a separate pretext. . . . Then, when he had subdued and made tributary to himself all the Asiatic Greeks of the

¹ The mass of the people usually cherish superstitions (and war always gives them prominence) from which the more highly educated minority are free.

mainland, he planned to build ships and attack the islanders; but when his preparations for shipbuilding were ready, either Bias of Priene, or Pittacus of Mitylene (the story is told of both), came to Sardis, and being asked by Crœsus for news about Hellas, put an end to the shipbuilding by giving the following answer: "King, the islanders are buying ten thousand horse, with intent to march against you to Sardis." Crœsus, thinking that he spoke the truth, said: "Would that the gods may put it in the minds of the island men to come on horseback against the sons of the Lydians!" Then the other answered and said: "King, I see that you earnestly pray that you may catch the islanders riding horses on the mainland, and what you expect is but natural. And the islanders, now that they have heard that you are building ships to attack them therewith, think you that they pray for aught else than that they may catch Lydians on the seas, and thereby be avenged on you for having enslaved the Greeks who dwell on the mainland!" Crœsus was well pleased with this conclusion, for it seemed to him that the man spoke but reasonably; so he took the advice and built no more ships. Thus it came about that he made friends of the Ionian islanders.

i. 26 (Godley).

The story is typical of Herodotus, the Father of History, whose book, the first of its kind in the world, Wordsworth thought the most interesting and instructive, next to the Bible, that had ever been written. Of course other men had experimented with prose before him, and had written of travels, and geography, and even of history. One of them, Hecataeus of Miletus, also a great traveller, some two generations earlier in date, he quotes by name now and then. None of these early books, however, has survived. Of Hecataeus' book a writer of the second century A.D. tells us that "it had less charm than Herodotus—ever so much," which may perhaps explain its failure to survive, when every copy of a book had to be written out to order by a scribe. The charm of Herodotus is irresistible. He wrote his history "that the great and wonderful deeds done by Greeks and Persians should not lack renown." Born an Ionian of Halikarnassus in Caria,

he travelled very widely before he wrote it, visiting Egypt, Cyrene, Syria, the Black Sea, perhaps Babylon, and it may be even Susa, besides Italy, and many parts of Greece and Asia Minor; and as an introduction to the story of the war he describes at length what he saw and what he heard in the countries that he visited. But he was born about 484 B.C., six years after Marathon was fought, and sixty after Crœsus lost his throne. His book, therefore, cannot have the accuracy of modern histories that are founded upon a wealth of documents, or even of the history of his younger contemporary, Thucydides, who lived through the great and terrible days that he described. In the main Herodotus had to rely upon tradition, which he gathered from those with whom he talked during his travels. What would the tale of our Great War become if it were written thirty years hence by an historian who was born after it broke out; who had very few contemporary documents to help him, and who gathered most of his material bit by bit, often through an interpreter, from elderly men, English, French, Germans, Russians, Turks, who had fought in it in their youth? And Crœsus and Cyrus were two generations farther away still; Herodotus could hardly have talked with anybody who had talked to them. But oral tradition is not to be despised. Before books are used, it preserves a wealth of detail and attains to a degree of accuracy that are hardly conceivable in an age that is not required to make such demands upon the power of memory. The use of letters, says Plato, "will create forgetfulness in the learners' souls, because they will not use their memories; they will trust to the external written characters and not remember of themselves" — [*Phædrus*, 274]. Legends will grow, however, under such conditions; and legend, and even fairy-tale, play their part in the pages of Herodotus; and sometimes he tells us plainly

that, to the best of his belief, they are doing so. For being "one of those whose passion is to know the truth"—[Glover, *Herodotus*, 227], he sifted his evidence and tested the reliability of his authorities by the best methods at his command. But it has to be remembered that many supposed happenings, and many conjectural explanations, which would be incredible to us, were not incredible to him. They fitted into the scheme of things as the middle of the fifth century B.C. saw it, whether in Greece, or Italy, or Palestine, or Egypt.

Crœsus, so magnificent and so wealthy that to this day his name is used to suggest the possession of riches without limit, reigned only for fourteen years. Yet in that short reign he impressed the imagination of the Greeks as no other king of all the East. They had never been face to face with such power or wealth before, these men of little isolated cities. But though he took away their cherished independence, they did not feel all the shame in serving him that they felt later when they came under the Persian yoke. He understood them, and they him; Greek culture appealed to him. Greek was spoken freely in Sardis, as freely perhaps as Lydian. He showered splendid gifts on Delphi, and constantly consulted the oracle. All Lydians were welcomed at its festivals, and were received, if they wished it, as citizens of Delphi. The Lacedæmonians too were his friends and allies. Who could possibly overthrow a monarch so rich, so powerful? Did not even the Mede court him as a brother-in-law? So when Cyrus the Persian, one of the world's great conquerors, who had already overthrown both Mede and Babylonian, appeared on the far horizon and tried to tempt the Ionians to support him against Crœsus, they rejected his overtures. Delphi's foreign intelligence was for once at fault. Delphi was sure that Crœsus would win, and when he consulted the

oracle it encouraged him to fight, though its response was cast in the ambiguous form that could be interpreted in either sense according to the event. "If he should send an army against the Persian," he was told, "he would destroy a mighty empire."

Yet a shrewd adviser counselled him to leave the Persian alone.

"O King," said this wise Lydian, whose name was Sandanis, "you are making ready to march against men who wear breeches of leather and their other garments of the same, and whose fare is not what they desire but what they have; for their land is stony. Further they use no wine, but are water-drinkers, nor have they figs to eat, nor aught else that is good. Now if you conquer them, of what will you deprive them, seeing that they have nothing? But if on the other hand you are conquered, then see how many good things you will lose; for once they have tasted of our blessings they will cling so close to them that nothing will thrust them away. For myself, then, I thank the gods that they do not put it in the hearts of the Persians to march against the Lydians." Thus spoke Sandanis, for the Persians, before they subdued the Lydians, had no luxury and no comforts; but he did not move Crœsus.

HERODOTUS, i. 71 (Godley).

For Crœsus never doubted that he would win, not did the Greeks; but the hardy Persians of Cyrus proved the better men. Sardis was taken, and the Ionians had to reckon with a new master.

Cyrus had invited them to revolt against Crœsus and they had refused. But no sooner was he victorious than they did their best to repair their mistake, and we have this delightful fable.

As soon as the Lydians had been subdued by the Persians [says Herodotus], the Ionians and Æolians sent messengers to Cyrus, offering to be his subjects on the same terms as those which they had under Crœsus. Having heard what they proposed, Cyrus told them a story. Once, he said, there was a flute-player who saw fishes in the sea and played upon his flute, thinking that so they would come out on to the land.

Being disappointed of his hope, he took a net and gathered in and drew out a great multitude of the fishes; and seeing them leaping, "You had best," said he, "cease from your dancing now; you would not come out and dance then, when I played to you."

i. 141 (Godley).

So they made ready, after the Greek fashion, for the inevitable war, all but Miletus, who made a treaty with Cyrus as she had done with Crœsus. The other cities sent across the sea to Sparta to beg help from what was then the leading military power in Greece. But the Spartans had no love of foreign adventure, and would send no army. Isolated in their little world, they were very ignorant of what went on beyond its narrow limits. They judged others by their own standard, as all men are apt to do until they study history, and take wide surveys of the countries and men of their own time, noting their characters, customs and resources, and how they differ from their own. So with the pride and confidence of ignorance they sent a herald to Cyrus to tell him "that he must harm no city on Greek territory; or the Lacedæmonians would punish him. When the herald had so spoken, Cyrus (it is said) asked the Greeks that were present who and how many in number were these Lacedæmonians who made him this declaration. When he was told, he said to the Spartan herald, 'I never yet feared men who have a place set apart in the midst of their city where they perjure and deceive each other. These Spartans, if I keep my health, shall have, not the sufferings of the Ionians to chatter about, but some of their own'"—[Herodotus, i. 152].

The only chance of success, and it was but a poor one, would have been to unite as one people and act together. Thales, the philosopher of Miletus, no less practical and wise as a statesman than he had shown himself as a man of business, advised that course, but

his advice was disregarded. Others were frankly hopeless, and offered the desperate counsel that all should sail away together and found one city for all the Ionians in Sardinia. In the end they sat, each in their own city, waiting till the Persian army should appear, and one by one the cities fell. Then once more the Greek love of independence (so strong that they could not surrender it even in a common cause) rose to a splendid height of self-sacrifice. Rather than serve the Persian, the people of two cities abandoned the homes that they loved, and sailed away with what their ships could carry. Those of Phokæa, which generations earlier had colonised Marseilles, went to Corsica, where one of their own colonies received them; and the folk of Teos found a new home at Abdera on the coast of Thrace.

For the next forty years the history of Ionia is a blank. The people felt that they were but slaves, and their hearts—Greek hearts—were filled with shame. They knew that their kinsmen across the Ægean thought them unworthy of their race. Like other subjects of Persia, the cities paid their tribute, and furnished their contingents to the armies that brought the old empires one by one beneath the Persian yoke. When Tyre, which had defied Nebuchadnezzar, was conquered, her splendid seamen were pressed into the conqueror's service, and by their aid the Persians became masters of the sea. Then the islands of the Ægean were at last subdued, and their fleets too were added to the Persian navy, and would ere long be used against their motherland.

Neither Cyrus nor his son Kambyzes made any attempt upon Hellas. They had other work to do. Darius, who was raised to the throne in 521 B.C., was busy during his earlier years in organising the vast empire that his predecessors had won, an empire that

stretched from the Caspian to Egypt and from the Black Sea to the Punjab. Against the armies of that huge empire little Greece, not even then effectively united, would have to fight for freedom by the time the next century was ten years old.

And the Persians were still in their prime. Herodotus, who saw much of them thirty years after the crisis of the struggle had passed, when at last peace had been made in 448 B.C., and the luxury of Lydia had long worked its effect upon them, did not conceal his admiration for their qualities. What they once were he described in the story of Sandanis and Cræsus, and elsewhere, in a famous passage that was to serve Ruskin as a text when discoursing on education, he says, "They educate their boys from five to twenty years old, and teach them three things only: to ride, to shoot with the bow, and to tell the truth"—[i. 136]. And he adds, "What they may not do, neither may they speak. They hold lying to be foulest of all, and next to that debt; for which they have many other reasons, but this in especial, that the debtor must needs (so they say) speak some falsehood." And they had a prudent care for the public health. They would not permit any pollution of their rivers. They might not so much as wash their hands in them.

What hope had the Greeks but to die in defence of their country, or to follow the example of Phokæa, and sail away to some new home?

Herodotus was not born when the first invaders came, but Æschylus, the great tragedian, fought against them at Marathon, and when he died, that, and not his immortal tragedies, was the achievement recorded in his epitaph. And this is how, through the mouths of the Chorus of aged Persians in his *Persæ*, he pictures the irresistible onset of the mighty host that came ten years later to avenge that first defeat:

And myriad-peopled Asia's King, a battle-eager lord,
From utmost east to utmost west sped on his countless horde
In unnumbered squadrons marching, in fleets of keels untold,
Knowing none dare disobey,
For stern overseers were they
Of the godlike King begotten of the ancient Race of Gold.

And, flashing from his eyes the deadly dragon's steel-blue glance,
On Assyrian battle-car,
With unnumbered men of war
He hurls the war-god of the bow on the heroes of the lance.

Heroes?—none is so heroic as to stem that warrior-flood!
Not their strongest dams shall bide
Such resistless ocean-tide:—
Nay, Persia's valiant myriads shall in no wise be withstood.
Persæ, 73-92 (A. S. Way).

CHAPTER VII

THE IONIAN REVOLT

WHEN Darius had finished the task of organising his wide Asiatic and African dominions, he turned his attention to Europe. Over and over again invasion from the north had spread ruin through Asia Minor. It was not long since the Kimmerians, and the Skythians after them, had passed destroying over the land. What had happened before would happen again, if steps were not taken to secure the northern frontier. That frontier was to give ceaseless trouble in later centuries to the Roman Empire. And it still gives trouble; for the Balkan States, which lie about it, are a constant cause of anxiety to both Europe and Asia Minor to this day. So an invasion of Thrace was planned, and a march northward to the Danube, and beyond it. And to the west, across the Ægean, lay those restless Greeks, who would always be ready to help their Ionian kinsmen to regain their freedom on the first favourable opportunity. Were they not, too, expelling their tyrants, and setting up democracies everywhere—democracies always so troublesome to imperial powers on their frontiers? Naturally enough the banished tyrants fled to Asia, and attached themselves to the Persian court, where indeed “the sons of Peisistratus sat at the Persian’s elbow and brought charges continually against the Athenians”—[Herodotus, vi. 94]. Other exiles also were playing the traitor in their desire for restoration and revenge. One of them, Demaratus,

the exiled King of Sparta, we shall meet again, also at the Persian’s elbow.

It was about 512 B.C. that Darius marched through Thrace, and over the Danube, into what is now Roumania and Southern Russia, against the Skythians, a nomad race “who had no town in their whole land”—[ibid., vii. 10]. Herodotus gives a most dramatic account of the adventure, which, as he describes it, perhaps not very accurately, ended in a retreat almost as disastrous as that of Napoleon.

The Ionians, with the other peoples of the empire, sent their contingents to the army under the command of their tyrants, among whom two, Histiaëus of Miletus and Miltiades of the Thracian Chersonese (Gallipoli), became famous in very different ways. A Greek engineer built the bridge of boats by which the army crossed the Bosphorus, and a Greek fleet sailed up the western coast of the Black Sea as far as the mouths of the Danube. There another bridge of boats was built, and Darius marched over into Skythia, leaving the Greeks to guard the bridge. The Skythians succeeded in cutting his communications, and appeared at the bridge, where they tried to persuade the Greek generals to break it up and leave Darius to his fate. Some (Miltiades was one) would have liked to do so, but Histiaëus pointed out to his fellow-tyrants that, if they ruined the expedition by their desertion, they themselves would be ruined too, for a free Ionia would not long put up with tyrants. His argument prevailed, and the Greeks waited for Darius. Histiaëus of course was thenceforth in high favour, and a little later the king rewarded him with a fine principality near the mouth of the river Strymon¹ in Macedonia, carved out of the conquests of his general Megabazus, who had completed the reduction of Thrace after the withdrawal from

¹ The modern Struma.

Skythia, and had carried the Persian arms to the Strymon and beyond. Histiaëus, however, did not long enjoy his new possessions, for Megabazus did not like to see an ambitious Greek in command of a position which was then, as now, of great strategical importance,¹ for Nine Ways met there, coming from all parts of the compass to cross the river where it leaves Lake Kerkinitis. So he persuaded Darius to recall Histiaëus, and, pretending friendship, to require him to come and live with him at the court in distant Susa. The story goes that Histiaëus wearied of his splendid exile, and longed for home. Like so many other Greeks, he was ready to go any lengths to satisfy his longing. So through his son-in-law Aristagoras, who governed Miletus in his absence, he stirred up the city, and with it all Ionia, to revolt, hoping that Darius would send him down to the coast to restore order. That was the story which, with much romantic detail, was told to Herodotus in later days. Perhaps it was the story which Histiaëus used to tell after Miletus had refused to receive him, and he had set up as a mere pirate at Byzantium, where he preyed upon the shipping that passed up and down the straits, until the Persian satrap caught him and crucified him in 493 B.C.

The revolt broke out in 499, and the Ionians at once appealed to the motherland for help. First they sent to Sparta, for nobody yet dreamed that Athens could match the trained soldiers of Sparta, where every citizen lived under rigid discipline from childhood. The Ionian ambassador was Aristagoras. He was received in Sparta by Kleomenes, one of the two joint kings, and Herodotus has a memorable story of the interview.

It was in the reign of Kleomenes [he says] that Aristagoras the despot of Miletus came to Sparta; and when he had

¹ When Xerxes crossed the Strymon in 480, he buried alive nine native youths and maidens as an offering to the gods.

audience of the king (so the Lacedæmonians say) he brought with him a brazen tablet on which the map of all the earth was engraved, and all the sea and all the rivers. Having been admitted to converse with Kleomenes, Aristagoras spoke thus to him: "Wonder not, Kleomenes, that I have been so zealous to come hither; for such is our present state: that the sons of the Ionians should be slaves and not free men is a shame and grief to ourselves in especial, and of all others to you, inasmuch as you are the leaders of Hellas. Now, therefore, we beseech you by the gods of Hellas, save your Ionian kinsmen from slavery. This is a thing that you may easily achieve; for the orientals are no valiant men, and your valour in war is pre-eminent. And for their fashion of fighting, they carry bows and short spears; and they go to battle with breeches on their legs and turbans on their heads; so they are easy to overcome. Further, the dwellers in that continent have more good things than all other men together, gold first, and silver too and bronze and coloured raiment and beasts of burden and slaves; all this you can have at your heart's desire. And the lands wherein they dwell lie next to each other, as I shall show you: here are the Ionians, and here the Lydians, who inhabit a good land and have great store of silver" (showing as he spoke the map of the earth which he had brought engraved on the tablet), "and next to the Lydians" (said Aristagoras in his speech) "you see the Phrygians, to the east, men that of all known to me are the richest in flocks and in the earth's produce. Close by them are the Cappadocians, whom we call Syrians; and their neighbours are the Cilicians, whose land reaches to the sea yonder, wherein you see the island of Cyprus lying; the yearly tribute which they pay to the King is five hundred talents. Next to the Cilicians, here are the Armenians, another people rich in flocks, and after the Armenians the Matieni, whose country I show you; and you see the Kissian land adjoining theirs; therein, on the Choaspes (yonder it is), lies that Susa where lives the great King, and there are the storehouses of his wealth; take that city, and then you need not fear to challenge Zeus for riches. What! you must needs then fight for straitened strips of land of no worth—fight for that with Messenians, who are as strong as you, and Arcadians and Argives, men that have naught in the way of gold and silver, for which things many are spurred by zeal to fight and die: yet when you can readily be masters of all Asia, will you refuse to essay it?" Thus spoke Aristagoras. Kleomenes replied: "Milesian, my guest, wait till the third day for my answer."

Thus far they advanced at that hearing. But when on the day appointed for the answer they came to the place whereon

they had agreed, Kleomenes asked Aristagoras how many days' journey it was from the Ionian Sea to the King. Till now, Aristagoras had been cunning and fooled the Spartan right well; but here he made a false step; for if he desired to bring the Spartans away into Asia he should never have told the truth; but he did tell it, and said that it was a three months' journey inland. At that Kleomenes cut short all the rest that Aristagoras began to tell him about the journey, and bade his Milesian guest depart from Sparta before sunset; for never (he said) would the Lacedæmonians listen to the plan, if Aristagoras desired to lead them a three months' journey from the sea.

Having thus spoken, Kleomenes went to his house; but Aristagoras took a suppliant's garb and followed him thither, and entering in he used a suppliant's right to beseech Kleomenes to hear him, but first send the child away; for Kleomenes' daughter, whose name was Gorgo, was standing by him; she was his only child, and was about nine years of age. Kleomenes bade him say what he would and not let the child's presence hinder him. Then Aristagoras began to promise Kleomenes from ten talents¹ upwards, if he would grant his request. Kleomenes refusing, Aristagoras offered him ever more and yet more, till when he promised fifty talents the child cried out, "Father, the stranger will corrupt you, unless you leave him and go away." Kleomenes was pleased with the child's counsel and went into another room; and Aristagoras departed clean out of Sparta, and could find no occasion for telling further of the journey inland to the King's place.

v. 49-51 (Godley).

From Sparta Aristagoras went to Athens and to Eretria in Eubœa. Both promised ships, Athens twenty, Eretria five, to help their kinsmen in the fight for freedom; "and these ships," said Herodotus, "were the beginning of evils for Greeks and barbarians"—[v. 97]. That is how contemporary opinion sees things. Posterity may acclaim the first move in the heroic struggle which was to save for all after-ages the imperilled heritage of Greece. War does not always "worsen all things": it sometimes saves things that are beyond all price. So we see the Persian wars. So posterity perhaps will see the war that seems to have worsened

¹ About £2400.

so sadly all things for us who have lived through it, and for our children.

In 498 the Athenians and Eretrians joined an Ionian army under Aristagoras, and together they marched up to Sardis and occupied the city, the small Persian force withdrawing to the citadel. A fire broke out, and the whole town was soon ablaze. The Greeks had to withdraw and marched back to the coast, where near Ephesus they were met and defeated by a Persian army. The Athenians went home and took no further part in the war. The Ionians, however, maintained the unequal struggle for five more years. But one by one the cities fell, and at last Miletus itself was besieged. If it were taken all would be over. It was vain to attempt to meet the Persians on land. The one hope was in the fleet. The Ionians had 353 triremes, the Persians 600, which were furnished by Phœnicia, Egypt, and other subject states.

The Persians were landsmen born and bred, but they took their share in the sea-fights like any Blake or Monk, for

they learned to look unquailing on the highways of the sea,
When the flails of tempest smite,
And its meadows blossom white,
Grasping slender reins of army-wafting galleys fearlessly.
ÆSCHYLUS, *Persæ*, 108-114 (A. S. Way).

The Ionians were concentrated at the little island of Lade, which then covered the harbour of Miletus, but which now is a part of the mainland owing to the silting up of the channel between. The fleet lacked training: discipline was lax, and as usual there were too many commanders. Now Phokæa had sent from the remnant of its once prosperous and enterprising people a tiny contingent of three ships under their leader Dionysius, an able seaman with a real genius for command. This man knew that such a fleet could

never win a battle. So—but let Herodotus himself tell the tale:

Presently [he says], the Ionians being gathered at Lade, assemblies of them were held. Among those who addressed them was Dionysius the Phokæan admiral, who spoke thus: "Our cause, Ionians, stands on the very razor-edge of decision whether we be freemen or slaves, yea, runaway slaves; now, therefore, if you consent to endure hardness, you will have toil for the present time, but it will be in your power to overcome your enemies and gain freedom; but if you will still be slothful and disorderly, I see nothing that can save you from being punished by the King for your rebellion. Nay, do you take my word, and entrust yourselves to me; and I promise you that (if heaven deal fairly with us) either our enemies shall not meet us in battle, or if they so do, they shall be utterly vanquished."

When the Ionians heard this, they put themselves in Dionysius' hands. He then ever put out to sea with ships in column, and . . . all day he made the Ionians work. For seven days they obeyed him and did his bidding; but on the next day, untried as they were in such labour and worn out by hard work and the sun's heat, the Ionians began to say each to other, "Against what god have we sinned that we fulfil this hard measure? We have gone clean daft and launched out into folly, committing ourselves into the hands of this Phokæan braggart, who brings but three ships; and having got us he afflicts us with afflictions incurable, whereby many of us have fallen sick already and many are like so to do; better than these ills it were for us to endure any and every lot, and abide this coming slavery whatsoever it be, rather than be oppressed by that which is now upon us. Marry, let us obey him no longer!" Thus they said, and from that day no man would obey: they built them booths on the island (as though they had been an army) wherein they lived sheltered from the sun, and never would embark in their ships nor exercise themselves therein.

vi. 11-12 (Godley).

Of course, when the Persians attacked, things went as Dionysius had foreseen. Some of the Ionian contingents deserted; those that stood their ground were overwhelmed, and the Persian victory was decisive. The siege of Miletus was now pressed closely by sea as well as by land, and in 494, the sixth year of the

war, it was taken by storm and destroyed. In the following year the islands fell one after another into the hands of the Persians, "and as they took each island they would 'net' it, and this was the manner of the 'netting'—the men would link hands and make a line reaching from the northern sea to the southern, and then they would advance over the whole island hunting the people down"—[Herodotus, vi. 31]. And terrible was the doom of the hunted, "for when the Persians had gained the mastery over the cities they chose out the comeliest boys and made eunuchs of them, and they carried the fairest maidens away to the king; this they did, and burnt the cities, yea, and their temples. Thus thrice had the Ionians been enslaved, first by the Lydians, and then twice by the Persians"—[ibid., vi. 32]. As for Miletus, "it was left empty of its people."

The fate of the once splendid city moved Athens deeply; so deeply that when in 493 Phrynichus, one of her early dramatists, produced a play on the subject, called *The Fall of Miletus*, "the whole theatre burst into weeping; and they fined Phrynichus 1000 drachmæ for reminding them of *their own* misfortunes"—[ibid., vi. 21]. Such was the legend; and well indeed might Athens speak of the disaster as her own misfortune, for she had offended beyond forgiveness. The doom of Miletus would be hers if Darius had his way. The story goes that, when he heard how Sardis had been burnt, he "asked who were the Athenians; and being told, he called for his bow, which he took, and laid an arrow on it and shot it into the sky, praying, as he sent it aloft, 'O Zeus, grant me vengeance on the Athenians,' and therewithal he charged one of his servants to say to him thrice whenever dinner was set before him, 'Master, remember the Athenians'" —[ibid., v. 105].

CHAPTER VIII

MARATHON

As soon as the Ionian Revolt had been crushed, and the Islands had been reduced to subjection, Darius turned his attention to Greece. In the spring of 492 he gathered a large fleet and army, and put his young son-in-law Mardonius in command. As soon as all the necessary preparations had been completed, "the Persians crossed the Hellespont on shipboard and marched through Europe with Eretria and Athens for their goal"—[Herodotus, vi. 43]. But the goal was not to be reached this time. Mardonius marched round the north of the Ægean, through the territories that Megabazus had conquered, and reached Macedonia, whose king, an earlier Alexander, submitted to him. But when the fleet tried to round the promontory of Athos, whose treacherous currents are still dreaded by Greek boatmen, "there brake upon the ships a north wind great and irresistible, and dealt very roughly with them, driving many of them upon Athos. Three hundred, it is said, was the tale of the ships that perished, and more than 20,000 men"—[ibid., vi. 44]. No further advance was possible, and Mardonius returned.

Next year Darius began to prepare for another expedition, and while preparations were going forward he "essayed to learn whether the Greeks purposed to wage war against him, or to surrender themselves. Therefore he sent heralds this way and that about Hellas bidding them demand a gift of earth and water"¹

¹ The recognised symbols of submission.

for the king." Many cities made the required gift, but when the heralds came to Athens and Sparta, they were thrown, at Athens, into the deep pit into which at that time condemned criminals were cast, at Sparta into a well, and bidden to take thence the earth and water that the king demanded. The unfortunate heralds of course were killed. Now to do such an outrage to a herald was a most unusual violation of the law which taught all Greeks to respect their persons. The superstitious Spartans were troubled in conscience, and some years later, when Xerxes had succeeded his father Darius on the throne, they tried to put themselves right with the guardian hero, or godling, of all heralds, whom they believed to be offended by their act. The story of what happened is characteristic. Let Herodotus tell it:

Now after that deed the Spartans could not win good omens from sacrifice, and for a long time it was so. The Lacedæmonians were grieved and dismayed; oftentimes they called assemblies, and made a proclamation inviting some Lacedæmonian to give his life for Sparta. Then two Spartans of noble birth and great wealth, Sperthias son of Aneristus and Bulis son of Nikolaus, undertook of their own free will that they would make atonement to Xerxes for Darius' heralds who had been done to death at Sparta. Thereupon the Spartans sent these men to Media for execution.

Worthy of all admiration was these men's deed of daring, and so also were their sayings which I here record. As they journeyed to Susa, they came to Hydarnes, a Persian, who was general of the sea-coast of Asia; he entertained and feasted them as guests, and as they sat at his board, "Lacedæmonians," he questioned them, "why do you shun the king's friendship? You can judge from what you see of me and my condition how well the king can honour men of worth. So might it be with you; would you but put yourselves in the king's hands, being as you are of proven worth in his eyes, every one of you might by his commission be a ruler of Hellas." To this the Spartans answered: "Your counsels to us, Hydarnes, are ill assorted; one half of them rests on knowledge, but the other on ignorance. You know well how to be a slave, but you have never tasted of freedom, to know whether

it be sweet or not. Were you to taste of it, you would counsel us to fight for it not only with spears, but with axes too."

This was their answer to Hydarnes. Thence being come to Susa and into the king's presence, when the guards commanded and would have compelled them to fall down and do obeisance to the king, they said they would never do that, no, not if they were thrust down headlong; for it was not their custom (said they) to do obeisance to mortal men, nor was that the purpose of their coming. Having beaten that off, they next said, "The Lacedæmonians have sent us, O King of the Medes, in requital for the slaying of your heralds at Sparta, to make atonement for their death," and more to that effect. Whereupon Xerxes of his magnanimity said that he would not imitate the Lacedæmonians; "for you," said he, "made havoc of all human law by slaying heralds; but I will not do that which I blame in you, nor by putting you in turn to death set the Lacedæmonians free from this guilt."

vii. 134-6 (Godley).

So Sperthias and Bulis returned to Sparta.

One does not know which to admire most, the courage and dignity of the Spartans, or the fine magnanimity of Xerxes, who, one feels, must have been a great gentleman, though he was to be proved no great commander.

The second attempt at invasion took place in 490, and it came by way of the sea instead of by land; for the Persians feared the voyage round Athos after their late experience. Mardonius was superseded, and Datis, a Mede, and Artaphernes, a Persian of the royal house, were appointed to the command, with instructions "to enslave Athens and Eretria, and bring the slaves into the king's presence." The army landed in Eubœa and laid siege to Eretria, which was speedily betrayed to them by two of its leading men. The city was plundered and burnt, and "its inhabitants were enslaved according to Darius' command." The fate of Miletus was its fate. Would Athens fare any better? The peril was very near now. Eretria in a direct line was only some thirty miles away. The terror of the Persian was

at its height. Did not the very name Persai mean in the Greek tongue to destroy? What was Athens that it should stand where Lydia, and Egypt, and the more distant empires of the East had fallen?

Guided by Hippias, who had accompanied the expedition, the Persians left Eubœa, and crossed to the Bay of Marathon, where his father Peisistratus had landed, when he returned after a ten years' absence from his second exile. The city was now only four-and-twenty miles away by a smooth and level road.

Perhaps it was fortunate for Athens that the tyrants had destroyed her walls, for if they had still been standing she would almost certainly have preferred to abide the issue of a siege, when the fate of Miletus and Eretria would have been hers too. Treason would have had opportunity to work; for Hippias had his friends. But having no walls behind which to shelter, the Athenians showed no sign of fear or hesitation. As soon as the news of the Persian landing was received—the Assembly met, and decided to send the army to Marathon forthwith. It was a heroic decision, for though there may have been soldiers of experience who realised the advantage which the weight of the close, well-ordered ranks of mail-clad spearmen, with their metal shields, would give them over the light-armed Persians with their bows and arrows, wicker shields and linen tunics, and their undisciplined methods of fighting, nobody had yet proved that ten thousand Greek hoplites could stand against ten times their number of the all-conquering Persians; and everything that had happened hitherto made it seem quite impossible that they should do so.

Before the army left the city, Pheidippides, a famous runner, was already speeding on his way to Sparta to ask for help. The distance was not far short of one hundred and fifty miles over very difficult country.

He reached Sparta on the second day after leaving Athens, and this was the message that he delivered:

"Lacedæmonians, the Athenians entreat you to send them help, and not suffer a most ancient city of Hellas to be brought into bondage by foreigners; for even now Eretria has been enslaved, and Hellas is the weaker by the loss of a notable city."

HERODOTUS, vi. 106.

The Spartans promised help, but they could not come at once. Not till the moon was full could they start,¹ and it would not be full moon for six days yet. The Persians would hardly wait for them.

Browning has told the tale as only a poet can, interpreting and amplifying Herodotus. Let a few of his verses re-create the scene. Pheidippides has returned and tells his tale.

Archons of Athens, topped by the tettix,² see, I return!
See, 'tis myself here standing alive, no spectre that speaks,
Crowned with the myrtle, did you command me, Athens and you,
"Run, Pheidippides, run and race, reach Sparta for aid!
Persia has come, we are here, where is She?" Your command
I obeyed,
Ran and raced: like stubble, some field which a fire runs through,
Was the space between city and city: two days, two nights did I burn
Over the hills, under the dales, down pits and up peaks.

Into their midst I broke: breath served but for "Persia has come!
Persia bids Athens proffer slaves' tribute, water and earth;
Razed to the ground is Eretria—but Athens, shall Athens sink,
Drop into dust and die—the flower of Hellas utterly die,
Die, with the wide world spitting at Sparta, the stupid, the
stander-by?

Answer me quick, what help, what hand do you stretch o'er
destruction's brink?

How,—when? No care for my limbs!—there's lightning in all
and some—

Fresh and fit your message to bear, once lips give it birth!"

¹ One of the many traces of the time when the moon was the most important of the heavenly bodies, and regulated the "year," the duration of which, before the cycle of the solar "year" was recognised and fixed, was but a lunar month. It was by such a "year" that the lives of Melchisedec, and Enoch, and other patriarchs were measured.

² They wore a golden grasshopper (tettix) in their hair.

O my Athens—Sparta love thee? Did Sparta respond?
Every face of her leered in a furrow of envy, mistrust,
Malice,—each eye of her gave me its glitter of gratified hate!
Gravely they turned to take counsel, to cast for excuses. I stood
Quivering,—the limbs of me fretting as fire frets, an inch from
dry wood:

"Persia has come, Athens asks aid, and still they debate?
Thunder, thou Zeus! Athene, are Spartans a quarry beyond
Swing of thy spear? Phoibos and Artemis, clang them 'Ye must'!"

No bolt launched from Olumpos! Lo, their answer at last!
"Has Persia come,—does Athens ask aid,—may Sparta befriend?
Nowise precipitate judgment—too weighty the issue at stake!
Count we no time lost time which lags through respect to the Gods!
Ponder that precept of old, 'No warfare, whatever the odds
In your favour, so long as the moon, half-orbed, is unable to take
Full-circle her state in the sky!' Already she rounds to it fast:
Athens must wait, patient as we—who judgment suspend."

The Athenians marched out of the city led by their ten generals—the *strategi*—and the polemarch Kallimachus. One of the ten was Miltiades, who had been obliged to fly for his life from his principality in the Thracian Chersonese after the collapse of the Ionian revolt. The army took up its station on the high ground that overlooks the Plain of Marathon, in a position so strong that the Persians could not attack it with any hope of success. When they did not move, a division of opinion arose among the Athenian generals. Should they leave their strong position and attack the Persians in the plain, or should they remain where they were? Five were for remaining, and five, among whom was Miltiades, for fighting. The decision rested with the polemarch. To him, therefore, Miltiades addressed the following appeal:

"Kallimachus, it is for you to-day to choose, whether you will enslave Athens, or free her and thereby leave such a memorial for all posterity as was left not even by Harmodius and Aristogeiton.¹ For now is Athens in greater peril than

¹ Famous because they gave their lives to kill Hipparchus. See above, p. 87.

ever since she was first a city; and if her people bow their necks to the Medes, their fate is certain, for they will be delivered over to Hippias; but if our city be saved, she may well grow to be the first of Greek cities. How then this can be brought about, and how it comes that the deciding voice in these matters is yours, I will now show you. We ten generals are divided in counsel, some bidding us to fight and some to forbear. Now if we forbear to fight, it is likely that some great schism will rend and shake the courage of our people till they make friends of the Medes; but if we join battle before some at Athens be infected by corruption, then let heaven but deal fairly with us, and we may well win in this fight. It is you that all this concerns; all hangs on you; for if you join yourself to my opinion, you make your country free and your city the first in Hellas; but if you choose the side of them that would persuade us not to fight, you will have wrought the very opposite of the blessings whercof I have spoken."

HERODOTUS, vi. 109 (Godley).

The arguments of Miltiades prevailed, and Kallimachus gave his vote in favour of attack. According to Herodotus, each general in turn exercised the chief command for a single day, but of the five who voted with Miltiades each made over to him his day's right of commanding. Miltiades, however, preferred to wait till his own day came round. Then, according to one account, the Persians began to move. Their cavalry were re-embarking, and it appeared that they intended to sail round Cape Sunium and make another landing hard-by the city itself. There could be no more waiting, and Miltiades launched his attack at once. Let Herodotus take up the tale:

Now when the Athenians were arraying at Marathon, it so fell out that their line being equal in length to the Median, the middle part of it was but a few ranks deep, and here the line was weakest, each wing being strong in numbers.¹

Their battle being arrayed and the omens of sacrifice favouring, straightway the Athenians were let go and charged.

¹ To avoid being outflanked by an army ten times their number, they had been obliged to strip their centre of men, and had left it perilously weak.

the Persians at a run. There was between the armies a space of not less than eight furlongs. When the Persians saw them come running they prepared to receive them, deeming the Athenians frenzied to their utter destruction, who being (as they saw) so few were yet charging them at speed, albeit they had no horsemen nor archers. Such was the imagination of the foreigners; but the Athenians, closing all together with the Persians, fought in memorable fashion; for they were the first Greeks, within my knowledge, who charged their enemies at a run, and the first who endured the sight of Median garments and men clad therein; till then, the Greeks were affrighted by the very name of the Medes.

For a long time they fought at Marathon; and the foreigners overcame the middle part of the line, against which the Persians themselves and the Sakæ were arrayed; here the foreigners prevailed and broke the Greeks, pursuing them inland. But on either wing the Athenians and Plataeans¹ were victorious; and being so, they suffered the routed of their enemies to fly, and drew their wings together to fight against those that had broken the middle of their line; and here the Athenians had the victory, and followed after the Persians in their flight, hewing them down, till they came to the sea. There they called for fire and laid hands on the ships.

In this work was slain Kallimachus the polemarch, after doing doughty deeds; there too died one of the generals, Stesilaus son of Thrasylaus; moreover, Kynegirus² son of Euphorion fell there, his hand smitten off by an axe as he laid hold of a ship's poop, and many other famous Athenians.

Seven ships the Athenians thus won; with the rest the Persians pushed off from shore, and taking the Eretrian slaves from the island wherein they had left them, sailed round Sunium, hoping to win to the city before the Athenians' coming. There was an accusation rife at Athens that this plan arose from a device of the Alkmeonidæ, who, it was said, made a compact with the Persians and held up a shield for them to see when they were now on shipboard.

So they sailed round Sunium; but the Athenians marched back with all speed to defend their city, and outstripped the foreigners in their coming. . . . The foreign fleet lay a while off Phalerum, which was then the Athenians' arsenal; there they anchored, and thence sailed away back to Asia.

In this fight at Marathon there were slain of the foreigners

¹ A thousand Plataeans had come to help the Athenians in gratitude for help given to them in the past against their enemies the Thebans.

² Brother of Æschylus the poet.

about six thousand four hundred men, and of the Athenians a hundred and ninety-two.

After the full moon two thousand Lacedæmonians came to Athens, making so great haste to reach it that they were in Attica on the third day from their leaving Sparta. Albeit they came too late for the battle, yet they desired to see the Medes; and they went to Marathon and saw them. Presently they departed back again, praising the Athenians and their achievement.

vi. 111-20 (Godfrey).

As for the tale of the signalling by the Alkmeonidæ, Herodotus did not believe it; for that great family were patriots, and they had played a prominent part in the expulsion of the tyrants, "wherefore plain reason forbids to believe that they of all men could have held the shield aloft for any such cause. Indeed a shield was held aloft, and that cannot be denied; for the thing was done; but who did it I know not, and can say no further"—[vi. 124]. So, remembering the many idle and intemperate accusations made against harmless citizens of signalling to the Zeppelins during the Great War, we shall certainly exonerate the Alkmeonidæ, and perhaps attribute the picturesque story of that flashing shield to some natural reflection of the sun's rays that in that time of fevered imaginations gave rise to talk and speculation.

There is a story (though as Herodotus does not tell it we may doubt whether it is true) that Pheidippides, after fighting at Marathon, was sent from the field to run to Athens and announce the victory. The great effort strained the stout heart beyond endurance: he gave his message in two words, "Chairete, Nikōmen" ("Rejoice, we conquer"), and fell dead.

So, to this day, when friend meets friend, the word of salute Is still "Rejoice!"—his word which brought rejoicing indeed. So is Pheidippides happy for ever,—the noble strong man Who could race like a God, bear the face of a God, whom a God loved so well;

He saw the land saved he had helped to save, and was suffered to tell
Such tidings, yet never decline, but, gloriously as he began,
So to end gloriously—once to shout, thereafter be mute:
"Athens is saved!"—Pheidippides dies in the shout for his meed.

The bodies of the hundred and ninety-two Athenians who fell in this famous battle, which saved Athens, and with her Hellas, and decided that the course of the world's history should take one direction and not another, were burned and their ashes buried on the field where they fell; and with them lie (they have been found there) the bones of the victims that were sacrificed to them, and the broken vases which perhaps were used at the funeral banquet. High over all was heaped a conical mound of earth, which still stands some thirty feet high, and two hundred paces in circumference. There for hundreds of years sacrifices were annually offered to the heroic dead, and wreaths were laid upon the mound as we, in gratitude for our deliverance, lay wreaths upon the Cenotaph, or upon our local war memorials. And legend said that "every night the dead warriors rose from their graves and fought the great battle over again, while belated wayfarers, hurrying by, heard with a shudder the hoarse cries of the combatants, the trampling of charging horses, and the clash of arms"—[Frazer, *Studies in Greek Scenery, Legend and History*, p. 28]. For indeed

Marathon became a magic word;
Which utter'd, to the hearer's eye appear
The camp, the host, the fight, the conqueror's career.

The flying Mede, his shaftless broken bow;
The fiery Greek, his red pursuing spear;
Mountains above, Earth's, Ocean's plain below;
Death in the front, Destruction in the rear!
Such was the scene.

BYRON, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, canto ii.

The name of Miltiades has been immortalised by his great achievement, and history passes lightly (how

should it not?) over his disgrace and death a year later, when the disastrous failure of an expedition, which he had advised and led, and in which he received a wound that caused his death, brought down upon him the anger of the people, who accused him of deceiving them, and laid a heavy fine upon him.

CHAPTER IX

AFTER MARATHON

WHEN the message concerning the fight at Marathon came to Darius son of Hystaspes, greatly wroth as he was already against the Athenians for their attack upon Sardis, he was now much more angered and the more desirous of sending an expedition against Hellas. Forthwith he sent messengers to all cities commanding the equipment of an army, charging each to provide much more than they had before provided of ships and horses and provision and vessels of transport. By these messages Asia was shaken for three years,¹ the best men being enrolled for service against Hellas and making preparation therefor.

HERODOTUS, vii. 1 (Godley).

Then, however, the preparations were interrupted. First came the revolt of Egypt, a consequence perhaps of Marathon, which would send a thrill of excitement and hope through all the conquered East. Then in 485 Darius died after a reign of thirty-six years, and was succeeded by his son Xerxes.² In the following year Egypt was reconquered, and from that time the preparations against Greece went forward uninterrupted. They were on a titanic scale. For this time it was to be no mere punitive expedition. Athens was to be punished, it is true, but Greece was to be conquered, and the Persians would press on westward through Europe from one end to the other until they had "made the borders of the Persian territory and of the firmament of heaven to be the same"—[Herodotus, vii. 8].

Once more the army would be led along the coast through Thrace and Macedonia, while the fleet kept

¹ 489-87.

² The Greek rendering of the Persian name Khshayârshâ. He appears in the Bible as Ahasuerus.

always in close touch with it. But Athos, at least, should be rendered harmless this time. The neck of the isthmus is about a mile and a half wide, and across it Xerxes cut a canal, the course of which can still be traced. And a bridge of boats was laid across the Hellespont itself in preparation for the passage of the army. Then at the narrowest point its width was seven furlongs: now, widened always by the rapid current, it is nearly half as much again. The first bridges (for there were two side by side, one for the army, the other for the transport) were not strong enough, and no sooner were they finished than "a great storm swept down and brake and scattered all that work."

When Xerxes heard of that, he was very angry, and gave command that the Hellespont be scourged with three hundred lashes, and a pair of fetters be thrown into the sea; nay, I have heard ere now that he sent branders with the rest to brand the Hellespont. This is certain, that he charged them while they scourged to utter words outlandish and presumptuous: "Thou bitter water," they should say, "our master thus punishes thee, because thou didst him wrong albeit he had done thee none. Yea Xerxes the king will pass over thee, whether thou wilt or no; it is but just that no man offers thee sacrifice, for thou art a turbid and a briny river." Thus he commanded that the sea should be punished, and that they who had been overseers of the bridging of the Hellespont should be beheaded.

HERODOTUS, vii. 34, 35 (Godley).

Then under new engineers ("architects," which means "master-craftsmen," is the Greek word) the work began again.

They laid fifty-oared ships and triremes alongside of each other, three hundred and sixty to bear the bridge that was nearest to the Euxine¹ sea, and three hundred and fourteen to bear the other; all lay obliquely to the line of the Pontus and parallel with the current of the Hellespont. Having so laid the ships alongside they let down very great anchors, both from the end of the ship nearest the Pontus to hold fast

¹ i.e. the Black Sea.

against the winds blowing from within that sea, and from the other end, towards the west and the Ægean, to hold against the west and south winds. Moreover they left for passage an opening in the line of fifty-oared ships and triremes, that so he that would might be able to voyage to the Pontus, or out of it.

Ibid., vii. 36.

To make the roadway "they heaped brushwood on to the bridge, and when this was all laid in order they heaped earth on it and stamped it down; then they made a fence on either side, lest the beasts of burden and horses should be affrighted by the sight of the sea below them"—[ibid.].

When all was ready, in the spring of 480 the great army set forward. There were contingents from forty-six different nations. From Arabia and from Africa they came, and even from India, 2500 miles away from the Ægean. There was no escaping the command to serve, as a grim tale will show. One Pythius, a Lydian, a man of vast wealth, who had entertained Xerxes and his army lavishly and was in high favour with him, came to him and said:

"Sire, I have a boon to ask that I desire of you, easy for you to grant and precious for me to receive." Xerxes, supposing that Pythius would demand anything rather than what he did verily ask, answered that he would grant the boon, and bade him declare what he desired. Thereupon Pythius took courage and said: "Sire, I have five sons, and all of them are constrained to march with you against Hellas. I pray you, O king! take pity on me that am so old, and release one of my sons, even the eldest, from service, that he may take care of me and of my possessions; take the four others with you, and may you return back with all your design accomplished."

Xerxes was very angry, and thus replied: "Villain, you see me myself marching against Hellas, and taking with me my sons and brothers and kinsfolk and friends; and do you, my slave—who should have followed me with all your household and your very wife—speak to me of your son? Then be well assured of this, that a man's spirit dwells in his ears; when it hears good words it fills the whole body with delight, but when it hears the contrary thereto it swells with anger. At

that time when you did me good service and promised more, you will never boast that you outdid your king in the matter of benefits; and now that you have turned aside to the way of shamelessness, you shall receive a lesser requital than you merit. You and four of your sons are saved by your hospitality; but you shall be requited by the death of the one whom you most desire to keep." With this answer, he directed the proper officers to find the eldest son of Pythius, cut him in half, and place the two halves to right and left of the road so that the army marched between them.

HERODOTUS, vii. 38, 39 (Godley).

Between the kingly magnanimity shown to the Spartans, Sperthias and Bulis, and the fierce savagery of this terrific punishment, how strange a contrast! But it is characteristic of the Oriental. Similar contrasts will be familiar to every reader of the *Arabian Nights*.

One more characteristic story. Before the army crossed the Hellespont, Xerxes wished to see the whole of it.

And this he could do, for a lofty seat of white stone had been set up for him on a hill there with that intent, built by the people of Abydos at the king's command. There Xerxes sat, and looked down on the sea-shore, viewing his army and his fleet. . . . But when he saw the whole Hellespont hidden by his ships, and all the shores and plains of Abydos thronged with men, Xerxes first declared himself happy, and presently he fell a-weeping. Perceiving that, his uncle Artabanus, . . . marking how Xerxes wept, questioned him and said, "What a distance is there, O king, between your acts of this present and a little while ago! Then you declared your happiness, and now you weep!" "Aye verily," said Xerxes; "for I was moved to compassion, when I considered the shortness of all human life, seeing that of all this multitude of men not one will be alive a hundred years hence."

Ibid., vii. 44-6.

Meanwhile what of Hellas? The vast scale of the deliberate preparations—the cutting of the canal, the bridging of the Hellespont, the gathering of men from the ends of the earth—must have daunted even the boldest hearts. Athens had been preparing. Hitherto

her fleet had always been subsidiary to her army. Now the genius of Themistokles preached the advantages of sea-power, and persuaded the people to put their navy first. The discovery of a rich bed of silver in the mines at Laureion helped him. He succeeded in defeating a proposal that the large sum which came to the state from mining royalties should be distributed among the citizens as a dole, and persuaded the Assembly to devote it to the building of two hundred triremes. Perhaps he represented that they would give employment and pay as sailors to many good democrats from the city and Piræus who found it difficult already to make both ends meet. And certainly they would serve to overawe Ægina, that powerful and dangerous neighbour, who for hatred of Athens might help the Persian. But whatever was the ostensible purpose put forward for building this fleet, in the event it and the new skill of the Athenian sailor saved Greece at Salamis. Themistokles had to fight hard to win the Athenians to his views. In a democratic state the Opposition will oppose, and if Themistokles asked for ships, Aristides the Just and Xanthippus, the father of the illustrious Perikles, be sure, would pin their faith to soldiers. Moreover the hoplites, who found their heavy armour themselves, were men of means, and their sympathies were as a rule with the moderate democrats, if not oligarchical. They did not want to see the proletariat raised to the position of saviours of the country. Were not the men of Marathon good enough? The Assembly thought not. Themistokles prevailed: the fleet was built, and Aristides and Xanthippus were ostracised.¹

¹ *Ostracism*. In times of political excitement the citizens could vote for the exile of a party leader who they felt would be better out of the way. This they did by writing his name on a piece of potsherd (*ostrakon*). The man against whom most votes were cast had to go.

In the autumn of 481, when it was plain that the storm of invasion must shortly break, a conference was held at the Isthmus of Corinth, which was attended by most of the states of southern Greece. There

they resolved in debate to make an end of all their feuds and their wars against each other, from whatever cause arising. . . . Presently learning that Xerxes was at Sardis with his army, they planned to send men into Asia to spy out the king's doings, and to dispatch messengers [throughout Greater Greece] praying aid for Hellas; for they hoped that since the danger threatened all Greeks alike, all of Greek blood might unite and work jointly for one common end.

HERODOTUS, vii. 145 (Godley).

But Sicily and the more distant Greeks had their own troubles, and did nothing. As for the three spies who were sent, they

came to Sardis, and took note of the king's army; but they were discovered, and after examination by the generals of the land army they were led away for execution. So they were condemned to die; but when Xerxes heard of it he blamed the judgment of his generals, and sent some of his guards, charging them if they found the spies alive to bring them before him. They were found still living and brought into the king's presence; then Xerxes, having inquired of them the purpose of their coming, bade his guards lead them about and show them all his army, horse and foot; and when the spies should have seen all to their hearts' content, send them away unharmed whithersoever they would go.

The reason alleged for his command was this: had the spies been put to death, the Greeks would not so soon have learnt the unspeakable greatness of his power, and the Persians would have done their enemy no great harm by putting three men to death; "but if they return to Hellas," said he, "methinks when the Greeks hear of my power they will before the expedition surrender this peculiar freedom that they have, and so we need not be at pains to march against them." So the spies were sent back after they had thus seen all, and returned to Europe.

Ibid., vii. 145-8.

The news was sufficiently alarming; and to make

things worse Delphi was issuing oracles that boded ill. For Delphi, so well informed of the immensity of Persia's power, was convinced that she must win, and it needed all the wit and adroitness of Themistokles to keep Athenian opinion steady. One oracle, delivered to inquirers from Athens, began with these terrifying words:

Wretches, why tarry ye thus? Nay, flee from your houses and city, Flee to the ends of the earth from the circle embattled of Athens!

"When the Athenian messengers heard that," says Herodotus, "they were very greatly dismayed, and gave themselves up for lost by reason of the evil foretold"—[vii. 141 (Godley)]. Though philosophers and intellectuals and even leading politicians might have their doubts about the nature of the inspiration that prompted oracles, and some knew well that not long before sordid bribery had on one occasion played a part, the mass of the people still clung to the old things of their faith, and to them the words of Delphi were the words of God. So it was well to humour them, and it was convenient, then as now, to have on your side all the help that the prevalent superstitions could afford you.

The Athenian messengers refused to give up hope. They went again to the priestess and craved some better answer, "else," said they, "we will not depart from thy temple, but will abide here till we die." The priestess therefore gave them a second answer, in appearance more merciful, though dark and riddling. Attica and Athens would be taken and lost, she said:

Yet shall a wood-built wall by Zeus all-seeing be granted
Unto the Triton-born, a stronghold for thee and thy children.
Bide not still in thy place, for the host that cometh from landward,
Cometh with horsemen and foot; but rather withdraw at his coming,
Turning thy back to the foe; thou yet shalt meet him in battle.
Salamis, isle divine! 'tis writ that children of women
Thou shalt destroy one day, in the season of seed-time or harvest.

With this answer they returned to Athens, and it is not surprising that

there was much inquiry concerning its meaning, and there were two contrary opinions among the many that were uttered. Some of the elder men said that the god's answer signified that the acropolis should be saved; for in old time the acropolis of Athens had been fenced by a thorn hedge, and by their interpretation it was this fence that was the wooden wall. But others supposed that the god signified their ships, and they were for doing nought else but equip these. They then that held their ships to be the wooden wall were disabled by the two last verses of the priestess's answer:

Salamis, isle divine! 'tis writ that children of women
Thou shalt destroy one day, in the season of seed-time or harvest.

These verses confounded the opinion of those who said that their ships were the wooden wall; for the readers of oracles took the verses to mean that they should offer battle by sea near Salamis and be there overthrown.

Now there was a certain Athenian, by name Themistokles, the son of Neokles, who had lately risen to be among their chief men. He said, that the readers of oracles had not rightly interpreted the whole; and this was his plea: had the verse been verily spoken of the Athenians, the oracle had used a word less mild of import, and would have called Salamis rather "cruel" than "divine," if indeed the dwellers in that place were in it and for it to perish; nay (said he), rightly understood, the god's oracle was spoken not of the Athenians but of their enemies; and his counsel was that they should believe their ships to be the wooden wall, and so make ready to fight by sea. Themistokles thus declaring, the Athenians judged him to be a better counsellor than the readers of oracles, who would have had them prepare for no sea fight, and in brief offer no resistance at all, but leave Attica and settle in some other country.

HERODOTUS, vii. 142, 143 (Godley).

All the while there was an uneasy suspicion that Sparta would fail them. It would be so easy for her to say that Northern Greece was indefensible, and that she must withdraw behind the Isthmus. Nothing but her need of the Athenian fleet prevented her from declaring at once in favour of that course, which in the end she actually adopted, sacrificing Leonidas and

his little band at Thermopylæ to save appearances, and leaving Attica and Athens, both in this and in the following year, to be taken and ravaged by the Persians. Her slow imagination could not see that, though an army at the Isthmus, protected by a wall across it, might prevent the Persian army from marching through it, nothing but mastery of the sea could hinder their fleet from landing in the south as many troops as Xerxes pleased, to take it in the rear.

Indeed Demaratus, an ex-king of Sparta, one of the exiles whom Xerxes had at his elbow, was always advising him to seize the island of Kythera. "Let them make that island their station," he said, "and issue thence to strike fear into the Lacedæmonians; if these have a war of their own on their borders, you will have no cause to fear lest they send men to save the rest of Hellas from being overrun by your armies. . . . If you do as I have said," he added, "then you may have the isthmus and all their cities without striking a blow"—[Herodotus, vii. 235]. It was fortunate that Xerxes did not follow his advice.

Demaratus plays a picturesque part in the great drama. Herodotus has much to say about him, and it has been plausibly conjectured that he obtained his information during his travels in Asia Minor from the ex-king's family, who were settled near the Dardanelles in "lands and cities" which Darius had given to their father.

He had been deposed through the machinations of his fellow-king Kleomenes, who bribed the Delphian priestess to declare him illegitimate, and finally was driven to seek refuge at the Persian court, where he became a trusted friend and valued counsellor, who, in Spartan fashion, said what he thought, and never flattered. Xerxes frequently consulted him, and though he often received an answer that he did not look for,

and that no Persian courtier would have given, he showed none of the resentment that at other times and with other men blazed out so cruelly. A famous interview took place after Xerxes had reviewed his army and fleet at Doriskus in Thrace; and this is the account that Herodotus gives of it¹:

"Now, Demaratus," said the king, "it is my pleasure to ask you what I would fain know. . . . Will the Greeks offer me battle and abide my coming?" . . . To this question Demaratus made answer, "O king, must I speak truly, or so as to please you?" Xerxes bade him speak the truth, and said that he would lose none of the king's favour thereby. Hearing that, "O king," said Demaratus, ". . . I say nought but good of all Greeks that dwell in those Dorian lands; yet it is not of all that I would now speak, but only of the Lacedæmonians; and this I say of them; firstly, that they will never accept conditions from you that import the enslaving of Hellas; and secondly, that they will meet you in battle, yea, even though all the rest of the Greeks be on your side. But, for the number of them, ask me not how many these men are, who are like to do as I say; be it of a thousand men, or of more or of fewer than that, their army will fight with you."

Hearing that, Xerxes smiled, and said, "A strange saying, Demaratus! that a thousand men should fight with a host so great as mine! . . . For myself, I think that even were they equal in numbers it would go hard with the Greeks to fight against the Persians alone. Not so; it is we alone and none others that have this skill whereof you speak, yet even of us not many but a few only; there are some among my Persian spearmen that will gladly fight with three Greeks at once; of this you have no knowledge and do but utter arrant folly."

To this Demaratus answered, "O king, I knew from the first that the truth would be unwelcome to you. But since you constrained me to speak as truly as I could, I have told you how it stands with the Spartans. Yet you yourself best know what love I bear them—men that have robbed me of my rank and my ancestral honours and made me a cityless exile. . . . For myself, I will not promise that I can fight with ten men, no, nor with two, and of my own will I would not even fight with one; yet under stress of necessity, or of some great issue to spur me on, I would most gladly fight

with one of those men who claim to be each a match for three Greeks. So is it with the Lacedæmonians; fighting singly they are as brave as any men living, and together they are the best warriors on earth. *Free they are, yet not wholly free for law is their master, whom they fear much more than your men fear you.* This is my proof—what their law bids them, that they do; and its bidding is ever the same, that they must never flee from the battle before whatsoever odds, but abide at their post and there conquer or die. If this that I say seems to you but foolishness, then let me hereafter hold my peace; it is under constraint that I have now spoken. But may your wish, O king! be fulfilled."

Thus Demaratus answered; Xerxes made a jest of the matter and showed no anger, but sent him away with all kindness.

vii. 101-5 (Godley).

It is time to say something of these Spartans, a people admired by all but loved by none, whom we shall see presently fighting their immortal fight at Thermopylæ, and justifying the assertion of Demaratus that they would abide at their post and there conquer or die.

By the sixth century B.C. they were already the leading power of the Peloponnese, chief among the Dorian tribes, whose invasions, long drawn out like those of Saxon and Dane, had closed the Mycenæan age and caused the great migrations that brought about the woes of which Hesiod sang. About them in Laconia dwelt other free Dorians who were known as Lacedæmonians, a name frequently used to include the Spartans too. But only Spartans, at most some 10,000 fighting men, enjoyed the privileges of citizenship. Even the Lacedæmonians were excluded, and, fine soldiers though they were, they do not appear to have resented the fact.

To rival Dorians Sparta showed no mercy. After a struggle prolonged and desperate the Messenians were crushed, their land was seized, and they themselves were reduced to a pitiless servitude and known as Helots (captives). Argos, however, was too strong

¹ The speeches have been considerably abbreviated.

to be so treated. She had once been the more powerful state, and between the two there was enduring ill-will, which the Athenians on occasion found to their advantage. At the moment of the Persian invasion she was still sullenly nursing the wounds received at a disastrous defeat some years before, and she would not fight for Hellas if she must fight under the leadership of Sparta: rather would she submit to Xerxes.

In the past Sparta had gone through a time of great disorder and confusion. In the seventh century she was a centre of culture, with her artists and poets, her merchants, her Lydian gold and eastern embroideries; but there was no good government, and she was inglorious in war. Early in the sixth century, however, a puritan influence got the upper hand, and the people submitted themselves to a discipline more severe perhaps than any known to history, in order that they might ensure their military predominance over the far more numerous enemies who ringed them round, and whom they scorned to accept as equals or to attempt to conciliate. They foreswore everything that, to their way of thinking, unfitted a man's mind or body for warfare and the selfless service of the state. Gold, silver, art, literature, home life, all luxury in food and possessions, every form of personal indulgence, were banned. The citizen lived only for the state. In a democratic community it is always difficult to reconcile the claims of public and private work: one or other is apt to suffer. The Spartans solved the difficulty "by leaving their private work undone, and using their public authority to get others to do it for them"—[Zimmerman, 112]. The "others" were the Helots, whose position differed but little from that of slaves. They farmed the lands of their Spartan masters while the latter drilled or boxed or hunted or, it might be, dressed their hair,

for they seem to have devoted as much attention to their personal appearance as any swaggering Montenegrin of to-day. Not that the Spartan swaggered: he was too well-bred, too carefully trained for that. He had been taken from his mother at the age of seven. If he had not been a healthy child at birth he would have been taken from her then, and left upon a mountain-side to perish of exposure. Weaklings were not allowed to live.

Even as little children they were not indulged or spoilt. The Spartan nurse knew her business, and her children grew up to be "not dainty or fanciful about their food, not afraid in the dark, or of being left alone; and without peevishness, or ill-humour, or crying." One feels no surprise when Plutarch adds that "upon this account Spartan nurses were often bought up, or hired by people of other countries." They would be to-day.

At the age of seven the Spartan boy passed into the hardest and roughest boarding-school that ever was, where the whole course of his education and training was directed to making of him a soldier who asked for no comfort, shrank from no pain, sought no wealth, and lived for no other purpose but to serve the state. But their training did not make them want to fight. Sparta was proverbially slow to go to war. The beds of these boys were rushes which they gathered for themselves with their bare hands (for no knife was permitted for that purpose); and to these in winter they might add some thistle-down for warmth. Their food was coarse, and but a bare sufficiency was allowed them. If they wanted more they must steal it, and if they were caught stealing they were whipped without mercy, and went hungry too. Such was their schooling in the art of self-help.

But the training of the mind was not neglected.

In the evening one of their masters would stay with them,

and one of them he bade to sing a song, to another he put a question which required an advised and deliberate answer; for example, Who was the best man in the city? What he thought of such an action of such a man. They used them thus early to pass a right judgment upon persons and things, and to inform themselves of the abilities or defects of their countrymen. If they had not an answer ready to the question, Who was a good- or who an ill-reputed citizen? they were looked upon as of a dull and careless disposition, and to have little or no sense of virtue and honour; besides this, they were to give a good reason for what they said, and in as few words and as comprehensive as might be; he that failed of this, or answered not to the purpose, had his thumb bit by the master.

PLUTARCH, *Lykurgus* (Clough).

This training developed in them an ability "to speak with a natural and graceful raillery, and to comprehend much matter of thought in few words"—[Plutarch, *Lykurgus* (Clough)]. The Spartan was famous for his terse and pungent turns of phrase. Such was the answer supposed to have been given by Lykurgus to an enthusiast who was for setting up a democracy in oligarchical Sparta, "Begin, friend, and set it up in your family"; such, too, the rejoinder of an unnamed Spartan who, "being asked to go hear a man who exactly counterfeited the voice of a nightingale, answered, 'Sir, I have heard the nightingale itself.'"

And they learnt their statecraft, as many a famous British statesman of the past learnt it, by listening to the conversation of their elders, an advantage which gives a man a long start in political life over one who has not enjoyed it. In the same school, too, "they learned to converse with pleasantries, to make jests without scurrility and to take them without ill-humour. In this point of good breeding the Lacedæmonians excelled particularly, but if any man were uneasy under it, upon the least hint given, there was no more

to be said to him. It was customary also for the eldest man in the company to say to each of them, as they came in, 'Through this' (pointing to the door) 'no words go out.'" In fact they cultivated a sense of humour and a wise reticence, which are very excellent gifts.

Until the boys reached the age of twenty they were instructed and controlled by the young men between twenty and thirty years of age. On reaching the age of twenty they became liable to military service, and they could marry. But even then there was no home life. They still lived in barracks, and could only pay brief and stolen visits to their wives. Not until they were thirty did they become full citizens.

Gold and silver, as we have seen, were banished from Sparta. The only currency permitted was in the form of bars of iron—ridiculous and really unusable for most of the purposes for which money is required, for no other people would accept it. But the Spartan reformers wished to hamper business rather than to help it, and they hoped to put far from their citizens all the obvious temptations to the gathering of wealth. When a man must have a yoke of oxen and a cart to transport £20 in cash, it was no longer worth while to rob or take a bribe. And if a man had had wealth he could not have used it for personal indulgence. His house would still be a log-cabin, for he might not use any tool in its building but an axe and a saw. And he did not really live in it, because all meals were taken in common in the barracks: even a king returning from a victorious campaign was denied permission to sup at home the first evening with his wife. The fare of the full citizen, like the fare of the boy, was hard and coarse and meagre. Each member of a mess had to contribute a fixed amount of meal, wine, cheese and figs, which his Helots had raised for him on his lot of land—a lot which the state apportioned to each man,

and which he might not either sell or divide. Some men still owned large landed estates, but they lived and fared just like the rest. They even dressed alike, all wearing a dark red military cloak. All citizens were equal; but there were so few citizens and the Helot did not count. The Spartan lawgiver, "instead of 'casting his strong shield,' like Solon, 'over both contending parties,' strengthened the one still further at the expense of the other, and made a permanent division between citizens and subjects or rulers and ruled. This explains, of course, the peculiar and ferocious asceticism of the Spartan code. It is not the sober simplicity intended to reconcile rich and poor in a common mode of life, but the rigid barrack-room uniformity of a nation of soldiers encamped for ever as a minority amid irreconcilable enemies"—[Zimmern, *The Greek Commonwealth*, p. 132]. Those enemies, the Helots, were a constant danger to the state, which imposed upon young Spartans the terrible duty of assassinating secretly those who had fallen under suspicion.

Equality and temperate living did not endure. The Spartan did not learn (who could?) to hate the things he might not have. He was obedient to the law only because in Sparta he had no opportunity to transgress it. It is an old saying which legislators may not even yet ignore, that "you may root out Nature with a fork, but she will always spring up again." Opportunity will come however much you may try to exclude it, and then the man who is not allowed to face and fight temptation falls. "As for your laws," said the Athenian envoys to the Spartans in 432, when the Peloponnesian War was threatening, "no city outside Sparta has any use for them, and when any of you are outside Sparta you do not observe them; but neither do you observe those of the ordinary Greeks"—

[Thucydides, i. 77]. In the fourth century, when Sparta had been put to the test of administering an empire, Aristotle had to record that her experiment in communism and moral training had failed. It was designed for the needs of a state in constant and deadly peril: victory and peace put it out of gear. The Spartans had not learnt how to live a life of leisure. They gave way to luxury and avarice, and found means to acquire gold and silver, winking at each other's evasion of the law and the cheating of the state, until Aristotle could only say that the legislator had done just the opposite of what he meant to do: he had reduced the state to poverty, and had inspired the individual citizens with a love of money. Athens had a better way. "Our government," said Perikles, in his famous funeral speech, "is not copied from our neighbours: we are an example to them rather than they to us." The Spartans, he said "toil from early boyhood in a laborious pursuit after courage, while we, free to live and wander as we please, march out none the less to face the self-same dangers." And again, "if we choose to face danger with an easy mind rather than after a rigorous training, and to trust rather in native manliness than in state-made courage, the advantage lies with us; for we are spared all the weariness of practising for future hardships, and when we find ourselves amongst them we are as brave as our plodding rivals."

"We are lovers of beauty," he said, "without extravagance, and lovers of wisdom without unmanliness. Wealth to us is not mere material for vainglory, but an opportunity for achievement; and poverty we think it no disgrace to acknowledge but a real degradation to make no effort to overcome. Our citizens attend both to public and private duties, and do not allow absorption in their own various affairs to interfere

with their knowledge of the city's" [Thucydides, ii. 40 (Zimmern)].

But Hellas did not yet know all the greatness of which Athens was capable. It was the heroism and public spirit, and the genius for leadership which she exhibited in these years of peril, that raised her to empire with its responsibilities and its temptations, its heritage of glory and of woe.

CHAPTER X

THERMOPYLÆ

WHERE was the stand to be made against the Persian? It was the spring of 480, and still the decision had not been taken. An army had been gathered at the Isthmus, and a second conference was being held. Should they defend the barrier of Mount Olympus and the Pass of Tempe, covering Thessaly; or should they let Thessaly go, and stand at Thermopylæ,¹ where the only practicable road for an army ran between precipitous cliffs and the sea? The Pass of Thermopylæ was some three miles in length, and at either end the passage between the mountains and the sea at that time narrowed to a gap no wider than a cart-way. Now the sea has retreated, and the appearance of the pass is greatly changed.

It was at first decided to hold the Pass of Tempe, and a force of 10,000 men-at-arms (hoplites) was sent by sea through the straits of the Euripus, and occupied the pass; but after a few days it was withdrawn, and returned to the Isthmus. There proved to be two other passes farther to the west which Xerxes might use, and the little army could not hold them all. Moreover, the loyalty of the Thessalians was doubtful. After further debate at the Isthmus it was resolved to hold Thermopylæ. That too, as it proved, could be turned by a small and active force, for a rough track led over the mountains, starting some distance to the west of

¹ The name means Hot Gates. There was a spring of hot water in the pass.

the entrance of the pass, and descended at the village of Alpeni to the east behind it. That fact, however, was not discovered until the Greeks had occupied the position.

The command was given to the Spartan king Leonidas,¹ But once more the Spartans began to make excuses. They could not march in strength, they said, for it was the time of the celebration of the Karnean Festival, and the Peloponnesians, too, would be delayed by the Olympic Games.² Festivals and games with Xerxes at the gates!³ So they sent but an advance-guard: the rest would follow later with all speed—if it was not too late. But their hearts were not in the defence of a point so far from their borders. They were still thinking of the Isthmus and the Peloponnese.

The force sent numbered only 7000, of whom but 300 were Spartans. Supporting it at Artemisium on the north coast of Eubœa was the combined fleet of 333 ships, 200 of them Athenian,⁴ with the Spartan Eurybiades in chief command, "for the allies declared that if a Lacedæmonian did not take command, they would break up the fleet, for never would they serve under the Athenians."—[Herodotus, viii. 1 (Rawlinson)]. The Athenians had hoped for the command, but they waived their claim when they found that it was not acceptable, for "they knew that, if they quarrelled among themselves about it, Greece would be brought to ruin," and the salvation of Greece was their first care.

¹ The Spartan kings, of whom there were always two, were little more than hereditary commanders-in-chief in the field.

² The date of the Olympic Games, like that of Easter, varied with the moon. The extreme limits were 6 August and 9 September.

³ But it must be remembered that festivals and games were matters of religious observance, and the Spartans might argue that it would be worse to violate a custom and anger the gods than even to neglect an obvious military precaution: cf. p. 113 above: "Count we no time lost time which lags through respect to the Gods."

⁴ Only ten were Spartan.

Herodotus says that the Persian fleet numbered 1207 ships. Perhaps the numbers had grown somewhat with time. Certainly it vastly outnumbered the Greek ships. But once more the winds and the waves fought for Greece. The Persians on their way to Aphetæ, at the entrance to the Pagasæan Bay (now the Gulf of Volo), were caught upon the dangerous Magnesian coast by a sudden storm which raged for three days, and wrecked 400 of their ships with great loss of life. Then, after arriving at Aphetæ, they sent a squadron of 200 ships round Eubœa to enter the Euripus by the southern end and block the Narrows, when they thought that they would have the Greeks in a trap between the main fleet at Aphetæ and the squadron at the Narrows. But again (how could any doubt it?) the gods took sides against the Persians. The Persian squadron "was sailing along near the Hollows of Eubœa, when the wind began to rise and the rain to pour: overpowered by the force of the gale, and driven they knew not whither, at the last they fell upon rocks—Heaven so contriving, in order that the Persian fleet might not greatly exceed the Greek, but be brought nearly to its level. This squadron, therefore, was entirely lost about the Hollows of Eubœa"—[Herodotus, viii. 13 (Rawlinson)].

Three indecisive engagements were fought in the straits between Aphetæ and Artemisium, which lay seven miles apart, one on the day which closed with the storm that destroyed the squadron in the Euripus, and one on each of the two following days. In the two first the Greeks attacked, on the second day greatly cheered by the news of the loss of the Persian squadron. On the third day

the captains of the foreigners, ashamed that so small a number of ships should harass their fleet, and afraid of the anger of Xerxes, instead of waiting for the others to begin the battle,

weighed anchor themselves, and advanced against the Greeks about the hour of noon, with shouts encouraging one another. Now it happened that these sea-fights took place on the very same days with the combats at Thermopylæ; and as the aim of the struggle was in the one case to maintain the pass, in the other it was to defend the Euripus. While the Greeks, therefore, exhorted one another not to let the foreigners burst in upon Hellas, these latter shouted to their fellows to destroy the Greek fleet, and get possession of the channel.

And now the fleet of Xerxes advanced in good order to the attack, while the Greeks on their side remained quite motionless at Artemisium. The Persians therefore spread themselves, and came forward in a half-moon, seeking to encircle the Greeks on all sides, and thereby prevent them from escaping. The Greeks, when they saw this, sailed out to meet their assailants; and the battle forthwith began. In this engagement the two fleets contended with no clear advantage to either—for the armament of Xerxes injured itself by its own greatness, the vessels falling into disorder, and oft-times running foul of one another; yet still they did not give way, but made a stout fight, since the crews felt it would indeed be a disgrace to turn and fly from a fleet so inferior in number. The Greeks therefore suffered much, both in ships and men; but the foreigners experienced a far larger loss of each. So the fleets separated after such a combat as I have described.

HERODOTUS, viii. 15-16 (Rawlinson).

Then came the news that Leonidas and his men had been overwhelmed at Thermopylæ; it was useless to maintain the advanced position at Artemisium any longer, for there was now no army to cover from a landing in the rear; so the fleet withdrew southward, and we shall find it presently at Salamis.

And now Themistokles chose out the swiftest sailors from among the Athenian vessels, and, proceeding to the various watering-places along the coast, cut inscriptions on the rocks, which were read by the Ionians the day following, on their arrival at Artemisium. The inscriptions ran thus: "Men of Ionia; ye do wrong to fight against your own fathers, and to give your help to enslave Greece. We beseech you therefore to come over, if possible, to our side; if you cannot do this, then, we pray you, stand aloof from the contest yourselves, and persuade the Karians to do the like. If neither of these things be possible, and you are hindered by a force too strong

to resist, from venturing upon desertion, at least when we come to blows fight backwardly, remembering that you are sprung from us, and that it was through you we first provoked the hatred of the foreigner." Themistokles, in putting up these inscriptions, looked, I believe, to two chances—either Xerxes would not discover them, in which case they might bring over the Ionians to the side of the Greeks; or they would be reported to him and made a ground of accusation against the Ionians, who would thereupon be distrusted, and would not be allowed to take part in the sea-fights.

Ibid., viii. 22.

The Persians were grievously disappointed by the stubborn resistance of the Greeks. They had confidently expected that numbers so vast would overwhelm all opposition, and that their advance would be a victorious—an unopposed—procession. And with each fight the Greeks were gaining confidence. Skill counted for more than mere numbers after all.

Equally unexpected was the amazing resistance offered to them during those same days at Thermopylæ. There in the pass Leonidas had established himself with his 7000 men, among whom were 4000 Peloponnesians, 400 Thebans of doubtful loyalty, 700 gallant Thespians, also from Bœotia, and the 300 immortal Spartans. When they reached their position they heard for the first time of the mountain track by which it could be turned, and a force of 1000 Phokians, who joined them at Thermopylæ, and who knew the ground, volunteered to hold it. Their country would be overrun if the pass were forced.

Across the narrowest point of the pass there had once been a wall. It was now ruinous, and the Greeks rebuilt it. But once more there was hesitation. Xerxes was close at hand, and the overwhelming numbers of his host had their effect upon the imagination of the Peloponnesians. They wanted to retreat to the Isthmus, but the Phokians and other local contingents

protested, and Leonidas resolved to stay and hold the pass.

While they thus debated, Xerxes sent a mounted watcher to see how many they were and what they were doing; for while he was yet in Thessaly, he had heard that some small army was here gathered, and that its leaders were Lacedæmonians, Leonidas, a descendant of Heracles among them. The horsemen rode up to the camp and viewed and over-looked it, yet not the whole; for it was not possible to see those that were posted within the wall which they had restored and now guarded; but he took note of those that were without, whose arms were piled outside the wall, and it chanced that at that time the Lacedæmonians were posted there. There he saw some of the men at exercise, and others combing their hair. Marvelling at the sight, and taking exact note of their numbers, he rode back unmolested, none pursuing nor at all regarding him; so he returned and told Xerxes all that he had seen.

When Xerxes heard that, he could not understand the truth, namely that the Lacedæmonians were preparing to slay to the best of their power or be slain; what they did appeared to him laughable; wherefore he sent for Demaratus the son of Ariston, who was in his camp, and when he came questioned him of all these matters, that he might understand what it was that the Lacedæmonians were about. "I have told you already," said Demaratus, "of these men, when we were setting out for Hellas; but when you heard, you mocked me, albeit I told you of this which I saw plainly would be the outcome; for it is my greatest endeavour, O king, to speak truth in your presence. Now hear me once more: these men are come to fight with us for the passage, and for that they are preparing; for it is their custom to dress their hair whensoever they are about to put their lives in jeopardy. Moreover I tell you, that if you overcome these and what remains behind at Sparta, there is no other nation among men, O king! that will abide and withstand you; now are you face to face with the noblest royalty and city and the most valiant men in Hellas." Xerxes deemed what was said to be wholly incredible, and further inquired of him how they would fight against his army, being so few. "O king," Demaratus answered, "use me as a liar, if the event of this be not what I tell you."

Yet for all that Xerxes would not believe him. For the space of four days the king waited, ever expecting that the Greeks would take to flight; but on the fifth, seeing them not

withdrawing and deeming that their remaining there was but shamelessness and folly, he was angered, and sent the Medes and Kissians against them, bidding them take the Greeks alive and bring them into his presence. The Medes bore down upon the Greeks and charged them; many fell, but others attacked in turn; and though they suffered grievous defeat yet they were not driven off. But they made it plain to all and chiefly to the king himself that for all their number of human creatures there were few *men* among them. This battle lasted all the day.

The Medes being so roughly handled, they were then withdrawn from the fight, and the Persians whom the king called Immortals attacked in their turn, led by Hydarnes. It was thought that they at least would make short and easy work of the Greeks; but when they joined battle, they fared neither better nor worse than the Median soldiery, fighting as they were in a narrow space and with shorter spears than the Greeks, where they could make no use of their numbers. But the Lacedæmonians fought memorably. They were skilled warriors against unskilled; and it was among their many feats of arms, that they would turn their backs and feign flight; seeing which, the foreigners would pursue after them with shouting and noise; but when the Lacedæmonians were like to be overtaken they turned upon the foreigners, and so rallying overthrew Persians innumerable; wherein some few of the Spartans themselves were slain. So when the Persians, attacking by companies and in every other fashion, could yet gain no inch of the approach, they drew off out of the fight.

During these onsets the king (it is said) thrice sprang up in fear for his army from the throne where he sat to view them. Such was then the fortune of the fight, and on the next day the foreigners had no better luck at the game. They joined battle, supposing that their enemies, being so few, were now disabled by wounds and could no longer withstand them. But the Greeks stood arrayed by battalions and nations, and each of these fought in turn, save the Phokians, who were posted on the mountains to guard the path. So when the Persians found the Greeks in no way different from what the day before had shown them to be, they drew off from the fight.

The king being at a loss how to deal with the present difficulty, Ephialtes son of Eurydemus, a Malian, came to speak with him, thinking so to receive a great reward from Xerxes, and told him of the path leading over the mountain to Thermopylæ; whereby he was the undoing of the Greeks who had been left there. . . . Xerxes was satisfied with what Ephialtes promised to accomplish; much rejoicing thereat, he

sent Hydarnes and the Persians under him; and they set forth from the camp about the hour when lamps are lit. . . . The Persians marched all night, the Cetean mountains being on their right hand and the Trachinian on their left. At dawn of day they came to the summit of the pass. Now in this part posted, as I have already shown, to defend their own country and guard the path . . . according to the promise that they had of their own motion given to Leonidas.

The mountain-side where the Persians ascended was all covered by oak woods, and the Phokians knew nothing of their coming till they were warned of it, in the still weather, by the much noise of the enemy's tread on the leaves that lay strewn under foot; whereupon they sprang up and began to arm, and in a moment the foreigners were upon them. These were amazed at the sight of men putting on armour; for they had supposed that no one would withstand them, and now they fell in with an army. Hydarnes feared that the Phokians might be Lacedæmonians, and asked Ephialtes of what country they were. Being informed of the truth he arrayed the Persians for battle; and the Phokians, assailed by showers of arrows, and supposing that it was they whom the Persians had meant from the first to attack, fled away up to the top of the mountain and prepared there to perish. Such was their thought; but the Persians with Ephialtes and Hydarnes paid no regard to the Phokians, but descended from the mountain with all speed.

The Greeks at Thermopylæ were warned first by Megistias the seer; who, having examined the offerings, advised them of the death that awaited them in the morning; and presently came deserters, while it was yet night, with news of the circuit made by the Persians; which was lastly brought also by the watchers running down from the heights when day was now dawning. Thereupon the Greeks held a council, and their opinions were divided, some advising that they should not leave their post, and some being contrariwise minded; and presently they parted asunder, these taking their departure and dispersing each to their own cities, and those resolving to remain where they were with Leonidas.

It is said indeed that Leonidas himself sent them away, desiring in his care for them to save their lives, but deeming it unseemly for himself and the Spartans to desert that post which they had first come to defend. For my own part I incline to think that when Leonidas perceived the allies to be faint of heart and not willing to run all risks with him, he bade them go their ways, departure being for himself not honourable; if he remained, he would leave a name of great renown,

and the prosperity of Sparta would not be blotted out. For when the Spartans inquired of the oracle concerning this war at its very first beginning, the Pythian priestess had prophesied to them that either Lacedæmon should be destroyed by the foreigners, or that its king should perish. . . . Of this (it is my belief) Leonidas bethought himself, and desired that the Spartans alone should have the glory; wherefore he chose rather to send the allies away than that the departure of those who went should be the unseemly outcome of divided counsels. . . .

So those of the allies who were bidden to go went their ways in obedience to Leonidas, and the Thespians and Thebans alone stayed by the Lacedæmonians; the Thebans indeed against their will and desire, and kept there by Leonidas as hostages; but the Thespians remained with great goodwill. They refused to depart and leave Leonidas and his comrades, but remained there and died with him. . . .

Xerxes, having at sunrise offered libations, waited till about the hour of marketing and then made his assault, having been so advised by Ephialtes; for the descent from the mountain is more direct and the way is much shorter than the circuit and the ascent. So the foreigners that were with Xerxes attacked; but the Greeks with Leonidas, knowing that they went to their death, advanced now much farther than before into the wider part of the strait. For ere now it was the wall of defence that they had guarded, and all the former days they had withdrawn themselves into the narrow way and fought there; but now they met their enemies outside the narrows, and many of the foreigners were there slain; for their captains came behind the companies with scourges and drove all the men forward with lashes. Many of them were thrust into the sea and there drowned, and more by far were trodden down bodily by each other, none regarding who it was that perished; for inasmuch as the Greeks knew that they must die by the hands of those who came round the mountain, they put forth the very utmost of their strength against the foreigners, in their recklessness and frenzy.

By this time the spears of the most of them were broken, and they were slaying the Persians with their swords. There in that travail fell Leonidas, fighting most gallantly, and with him other famous Spartans, whose names I have learnt for their great worth and desert, as I have learnt besides the names of all the three hundred. . . . And there was a great struggle between the Persians and Lacedæmonians over Leonidas' body, till the Greeks of their valour dragged it away and four times put their enemies to flight. Nor was there an end of this mellay till the men with Ephialtes came up. When

the Greeks were aware of their coming, from that moment the face of the battle was changed; for they withdrew themselves back to the narrow part of the way, and passing within the wall they took post, all save the Thebans, upon the hillock that is in the mouth of the pass, where now stands the stone lion in honour of Leonidas. In that place they defended themselves with their swords, as many as yet had such, ay and with fists and teeth; till the foreigners overwhelmed them with missile weapons, some attacking them in front and throwing down the wall of defence, and others standing around them in a ring.

Thus did the men of Lacedæmon and Thespiæ bear themselves. Yet the bravest of them all (it is said) was Dieneke, a Spartan, of whom a certain saying is reported: before they joined battle with the Medes, it was told Dieneke by a certain Trachinian that the enemies were so many, that when they shot with their bows the sun was hidden by the multitude of arrows; whereby being no whit dismayed, but making light of the multitude of the Medes, "Our friend from Trachis," quoth he, "brings us right good news, for if the Medes hide the sun we shall fight them in the shade and not in the sunshine." . . .

The slain were buried where they fell; and in their honour, nor less in honour of those who died before Leonidas sent the allies away, an inscription was set up, which said:

Four thousand warriors, flower of Pelops' land,
Did here against three hundred myriads stand.

This is the inscription common to all; the Spartans have one for themselves:

Go tell the Spartans, thou that passest by,
That here obedient to their laws we lie.

HERODOTUS vii. 208-28 (Godley).

CHAPTER XI

SALAMIS

THE disaster at Thermopylæ, and the withdrawal from Artemisium, had caused consternation throughout Greece. To the Athenians it meant the inevitable loss of their city. Xerxes would certainly occupy and destroy Athens. They must fly for safety and carry with them what they could; the rest would be lost. So they conveyed their wives and families and movable property to Salamis and Ægina and Trœzen. The Peloponnesians were thoroughly alarmed at last. It was the way of Sparta to move slowly and to be late, as their allies on occasion would remind them. Now at the eleventh hour they and their allies were in a fever of anxiety for the Peloponnese. For Attica and Athens they felt no concern, except so far as they could and must make use of the Athenian ships. They flocked together from all the cities in their thousands to the Isthmus, and set about blocking the precipitous Skironian road along its eastern shore, and constructing five miles of wall from sea to sea: at that they toiled without ceasing by day and night. But it would be useless unless the fleet could keep the command of the sea, and for that it must fight: if it were beaten (and without the Athenians it would be powerless) the Persians could land their soldiers where they pleased.

Meanwhile the fleet at the request of the Athenians had concentrated at Salamis. Its numbers are given variously. Æschylus says there were 310 ships, Herodotus 378. The Athenian squadron still numbered 200.

Eurybiades, the admiral, who had but ten Lacedæmonian triremes with him at Artemisium, now had sixteen. On board the fleet dissension reigned. The Peloponnesians argued that, if they were beaten at Salamis, they would be cooped up in the island, powerless to help their country or to save themselves; whereas if they fought off the Isthmus they could at worst escape to land, and they would be in touch with the army and could help it and be helped by it in case of need. The Athenians, on the other hand, contended that, in the narrow waters of the Strait of Salamis, the Greek fleet with its smaller numbers would have an advantage which it would lose in the open sea at the Isthmus, while withdrawal would uncover Ægina and Megara, and would put their own families on the island at the mercy of the Persians. Under such conditions the fleet would inevitably break up; each contingent would withdraw to protect its own city, and all would be lost.

A council of war was summoned to decide where they should offer battle, and while they were debating the news reached them that Xerxes had occupied Athens after destroying the little remnant of the people who had obstinately trusted in the protection of the "wooden wall" upon the Acropolis. The temples had been plundered and the city was in flames. The Peloponnesians were in a state of panic, and the council decided in spite of Themistokles to withdraw on the morrow to the Isthmus, and to give battle there. Themistokles returned to his ship with feelings that can be imagined. On boarding her he "was met," says Herodotus,

by Mnesiphilus, an Athenian, who asked him what the council had resolved to do. On learning that the resolve was to stand away for the Isthmus, and there give battle on behalf of the Peloponnese, Mnesiphilus exclaimed: "If these men sail away

from Salamis, you will have no fight at all for the one fatherland; for they will all scatter themselves to their own homes; and neither Eurybiades nor anyone else will be able to hinder them, nor to stop the breaking up of the armament. Thus will Greece be brought to ruin through evil counsels. But haste now; and, if there be any possible way, seek to unsettle these resolves—mayhap you might persuade Eurybiades to change his mind and continue here."

The suggestion greatly pleased Themistokles; and without answering a word he went straight to the vessel of Eurybiades. Arrived there, he let him know that he wanted to speak with him on a matter touching the public service. So Eurybiades bade him come on board and say whatever he wished. Then Themistokles, seating himself at his side, went over all the arguments which he had heard from Mnesiphilus, pretending as if they were his own, and added to them many new ones besides; until at last he persuaded Eurybiades, by his importunity, to quit his ship and again collect the captains to council.

As soon as they were come, and before Eurybiades had opened to them his purpose in assembling them together, Themistokles, as men are wont to do when they are very anxious, spoke much to divers of them; whereupon the Corinthian captain, Adeimantus, observed: "Themistokles, at the games they who start too soon are scourged." "True," rejoined the other in his excuse, "but they who wait too late are not crowned."

viii. 57 (Rawlinson).

Themistokles had had trouble with Eurybiades and Adeimantus at Artemisium, where the Persian numbers alarmed them so much that they talked of withdrawing. At that time the Eubœans sent Themistokles a present of 30 talents,¹ begging him to stay and fight a battle in defence of their island. For himself he needed no such persuasion, but money never came amiss to him. Out of the present he gave five talents to Eurybiades, and three to Adeimantus.

So these two captains were won by the gifts, and came over to the views of Themistokles, who was thereby enabled to gratify the wishes of the Eubœans. He likewise made his own gain on the occasion; for he kept the rest of the money, and no one knew of it. The commanders who took the gifts thought

¹ More than £7000.

that the sums were furnished by Athens, and had been sent to be used in this way.

HERODOTUS, viii. 5 (Rawlinson).

But now he had a harder task. Once more he repeated the arguments in favour of fighting at Salamis rather than at the Isthmus. At the end of his speech,

Adeimantus again attacked him, and bade him be silent, since he was a man without a city; at the same time he called on Eurybiades not to put the question at the instance of one who had no country, and urged that Themistokles should show of what state he was envoy, before he gave his voice with the rest. This reproach he made, because the city of Athens had been taken, and was in the hands of the foreigners. Hereupon Themistokles spake many bitter things against Adeimantus and the Corinthians generally; and for proof that he had a country, reminded the captains that with two hundred ships at his command, all fully manned for battle, he had both city and territory as good as theirs; since there was no Greek state which could resist his men if they were to make a descent.

After this declaration he turned to Eurybiades, and addressing him with still greater warmth and earnestness—"If you will stay here," he said, "and behave like a brave man, all will be well—if not, you will bring Greece to ruin. For the whole fortune of the war depends on our ships. Be persuaded by my words. If not, we will take our families on board, and go, just as we are, to Siris, in Italy, which is ours from of old, and which the prophecies declare we are to colonise some day or other. You then, when you have lost allies like us, will hereafter call to mind what I have now said."

At these words of Themistokles Eurybiades changed his determination; principally, as I believe, because he feared that if he withdrew the fleet to the Isthmus the Athenians would sail away, and knew that without the Athenians the rest of their ships could be no match for the fleet of the enemy. He therefore decided to remain, and give battle at Salamis.

Ibid., viii. 61-3.

Meanwhile the Persian fleet, strongly reinforced since it left Aphetæ, had arrived at Phalerum, the open roadstead which was the only harbour that Athens yet had, and at sight of it next morning,

preparing for the attack which Xerxes had resolved to deliver on the following day, the misgivings of the Peloponnesian chiefs were redoubled.

At first they conversed together in low tones, each man with his fellow, secretly, and marvelled at the folly shown by Eurybiades; but presently the smothered feeling broke out, and another assembly was held; whereat the old subjects provoked much talk from the speakers, one side maintaining that it was best to sail to the Peloponnese and risk battle for that, instead of abiding at Salamis and fighting for a land already taken by the enemy; while the other, which consisted of the Athenians, Æginetans and Megarians, was urgent to remain and have the battle fought where they were.

Then Themistokles, when he saw that the Peloponnesians would carry the vote against him, went out secretly from the council, and, instructing a certain man what he should say, sent him on board a merchant ship to the fleet of the Medes. The man's name was Sikinnus; he was one of Themistokles' household slaves, and acted as tutor to his sons. . . . The ship brought Sikinnus to the Persian fleet, and there he delivered his message to the leaders in these words: "The Athenian commander has sent me to you privily, without the knowledge of the other Greeks. He is a well-wisher to the king's cause, and would rather success should attend on you than on his countrymen; wherefore he bids me tell you that fear has seized the Greeks and they are meditating a hasty flight. Now then it is open to you to achieve the best work that ever you wrought, if only you will hinder their escaping. They no longer agree among themselves, so that they will not now make any resistance—nay, 'tis likely you may see a fight already begun between such as favour and such as oppose your cause." The messenger, when he had thus expressed himself, departed and was seen no more.

Then the captains, believing all that the messenger had said, proceeded to land a large body of Persian troops on the islet of Psyttaleia, which lies between Salamis and the mainland; after which, about the hour of midnight, they advanced their western wing towards Salamis, so as to inclose the Greeks. At the same time the force stationed about Keos and Kynosura moved forward, and filled the whole strait as far as Munychia with their ships. This advance was made to prevent the Greeks from escaping by flight, and to block them up in Salamis, where it was thought that vengeance might be taken upon them for the battles fought near Artemisium. . . . All these movements were made in silence, that the Greeks

might have no knowledge of them; and they occupied the whole night, so that the men had no time to get their sleep. HERODOTUS, viii. 74-6 (Rawlinson).

Meanwhile the Greeks were still engaged in hot debate. The fact that they were surrounded, and that retreat was no longer possible, was not yet known. The news was first brought by Aristides, whose sentence of ostracism had been revoked on the motion of Themistokles, and who had now arrived from Ægina to join the fleet. He had run the blockade in the darkness, and hastening to the council he called Themistokles outside to tell him what he had seen. Nothing could have given Themistokles greater satisfaction. "'Come now,' he said to Aristides, 'as you have brought the good news, go in and tell it. For if I speak to them, they will think it a feigned tale, and will not believe that the foreigners have inclosed us around. Therefore do you go to them and inform them how matters stand'" — [Herodotus, viii. 80]. Aristides went accordingly, but even then the greater part of the captains would not believe that their retreat was cut off. "But while they still doubted, a Tenian trireme . . . deserted from the Persians and joined the Greeks, bringing full intelligence" — [ibid., viii. 82]. Then at last they made ready for the fight that could no longer be avoided, and "at the dawn of day all the men-at-arms were assembled together, and speeches were made to them, of which the best was that of Themistokles; who showed them how in all things that are possible to man's nature and situation, there is always a higher and a lower; and told them that *they* must stand for the higher" — [ibid., viii. 83].

The captains then returned to their own ships and shortly afterwards the Greek fleet put out to sea. It had scarcely left the land when the Persians attacked. There was a moment of hesitation; many of the ships

began to back water; then a stout-hearted captain, Athenian or Æginetan (both countries claimed him) darted out and charged an enemy ship. Others followed him and the fight became general.

Few details were preserved. The Persians fought bravely enough. Even the Ionians did their part, in spite of Themistokles' appeal. But their numbers were against them. In discipline and tactics they were much inferior to the Greeks, and, cramped as they were into a narrow space, they fell into disorder.

The poet Æschylus, who fought in the battle, introduced in his play, *The Persæ*, which was acted eight years later, in 472, a description of it by the mouth of a messenger who arrives at the Persian court in Susa, and appears before Atossa, the widow of Darius and mother of Xerxes, with news of the great defeat. Atossa questions him:

Tell how began the conflict of the ships,
Who made first onset? Was it Hellas' folk,
Or my son, glorying in his host of ships?

Messenger. 'Twas this began all our disaster, Queen:
A demon or fell fiend rose—who knows whence?—
For from the Athenian host a Hellene came,
And to thy son, to Xerxes, told this tale,
That when the mirk of black night should be come,
The Greeks would not abide, but, leaping straight
Upon the galley-thwarts, this way and that
In stealthy flight would seek to save their lives.
Soon as he heard, discerning neither guile
In that Greek, nor the jealousy of heaven,
This word to all his captains he proclaims,
That, when the sun should cease to scorch the earth,
And gloom should fill the hallowed space of sky,
In three lines should they range their throng of ships
To guard each pass, each seaward-surging strait;
And others should enring all Aias' ¹ Isle:
Since, if the Greeks should yet escape fell doom,
And find their ships some privy path of flight,
Doomed to the headsman all these captains were.
Thus spake he, in spirit over-confident,

¹ Ajax (Aias) was a hero or local deity of Salamis.

Knowing not what the Gods would bring to pass.
 With hearts obedient, in no disarray,
 Then supped our crews, and every mariner
 To the well-rounded rowlock lashed his oar.
 But when the splendour faded of the sun,
 And night came on, each master of the oar
 A-shipboard went, and every man-at-arms.
 Then rank to rank of long ships passed the word:
 And, as was each appointed, so they sailed.
 So all night long the captains of the ships
 Kept all the sea-host sailing to and fro.
 And night passed by, yet did the Hellene host
 Essay in no wise any secret flight.
 But when the day by white steeds chariot-borne,
 Radiant to see, flooded all earth with light,
 First from the Hellenes did a clamorous shout
 Ring for a triumph-chant; and wild and high
 Pealed from the island rock the answering cheer
 Of Echo. Thrilled through all our folk dismay
 Of baffled expectation; for the Greeks
 Not as for flight that holy pæan sang,
 But straining battleward with heroic hearts.
 The trumpet's blare set all their lines aflame.
 Straightway with chiming dip of dashing oars
 They smote the loud brine to the timing-cry,
 And suddenly flashed they all full into view.¹
 Foremost their right wing seemly-ordered led
 In fair array; next, all their armament
 Battleward swept on. Therewithal was heard
 A great shout: "On, ye sons of Hellas, on!
 Win for the homeland freedom!—freedom win
 For sons, wives, temples of ancestral Gods,
 And old sires' graves! This day are all at stake!"
 Yea, and from us low thunder of Persian cheers
 Answered—no time it was for dallying!
 Then straightway galley dashed her beak of bronze
 On galley. 'Twas a Hellene ship began
 The onset, and shore all the figure-head
 From a Phœnician: captain charged on captain.
 At first the Persian navy's torrent flood
 Withstood them: but when our vast fleet was cramped
 In strait space—friend could lend no aid to friend,—
 Then ours by fangs of allies' beaks of bronze
 Were struck, and shattered all their oar-array;
 While with shrewd strategy the Hellene ships
 Swept round, and rammed us, and upturned were hulls
 Of ships;—no more could one discern the sea,

¹ As they came round the point of Kynosura (the "dog's tail" point of Salamis).

Clogged all with wrecks and limbs of slaughtered men:
 The shores, the rock-reefs, were with corpses strewn.
 Then rowed each bark in fleeing disarray,
 Yea, every keel of our barbarian host.
 They with oar-fragments and with shards of wrecks
 Smote, hacked, as men smite tunnies, or a draught
 Of fishes; and a moaning, all confused
 With shrieking, hovered wide o'er that sea-brine
 Till night's dark presence blotted out the horror.
 That swarm of woes, yea, though for ten days' space
 I should rehearse, could I not tell in full.
 Yet know this well, that never in one day
 Died such a host, such tale untold, of men.

ÆSCHYLUS, *Persæ*, 353-432 (Trans. A. S. Way).

One picturesque incident in the battle Herodotus has described at length, no doubt because the central figure in it was Artemisia, the queen of his own city of Halikarnassus, who had brought five triremes to the Persian fleet. She was a brave and able woman, and, says Herodotus—[vii. 99]—"of all his allies she gave the king the best counsels." When Xerxes consulted his subject kings and his admirals at Phalerum before the battle, all advised him to fight except Artemisia, who shrewdly told him, or so Herodotus says, to spare his ships, "'for these people are as much superior to your people in seamanship, as men to women'"—[*ibid.*, viii. 68]. If instead of fighting he let time work for him, the Greeks would soon scatter to their homes; for there was no store of food in Salamis, and moreover a threat to the Peloponnese would hasten the dispersal of the fleet. Xerxes praised Artemisia, but did not follow her advice, "for he thought that at Eubœa the fleet had not done its best, because he himself was not there to see—whereas this time he resolved that he would be an eye-witness of the combat"—[*ibid.*, viii. 69]. Fate was surely driving him to destruction. If he had taken the advice of either Demaratus or Artemisia things would have gone ill for Hellas. It was the deliberate judgment of Thucydides that

"the Barbarian miscarried through his own errors."
The presence of Xerxes

on the rocky brow
That looks o'er sea-girt Salamis

made no difference to the issue of the fight, "for as the Greeks fought in order and kept their line, while the foreigners were in confusion and had no plan in anything that they did, the issue of the battle could scarce be other than it was. Yet the Persians fought far more bravely here than at Eubœa, and indeed surpassed themselves; each did his utmost through fear of Xerxes, for each thought that the king's eye was upon himself"—[Herodotus, viii. 86].

What part the several nations, whether Greek or Oriental, took in the combat [Herodotus continues], I am not able to say for certain; Artemisia, however, I know, distinguished herself in such a way as raised her even higher than she stood before in the esteem of the king. For after confusion had spread throughout the whole of the king's fleet, and her ship was closely pursued by an Athenian trireme, she, having no way to fly, since in front of her were a number of friendly vessels, and she was nearest of all the Persians to the enemy, resolved on a measure which in fact proved her safety. Pressed by the Athenian pursuer, she bore straight against one of the ships of her own party, a Kalyndian, which had Damasithymus, the Kalyndian king, himself on board. I cannot say whether she had had any quarrel with the man while the fleet was at the Hellespont or no—neither can I decide whether she of set purpose attacked his vessel, or whether it merely chanced that the Kalyndian ship came in her way—but certain it is that she bore down upon his vessel and sank it, and that thereby she had the good fortune to procure herself a double advantage. For the commander of the Athenian trireme, when he saw her bear down on one of the enemy's fleet, thought immediately that the vessel was a Greek, or else had deserted from the Persians, and was now fighting on the Greek side; he therefore gave up the chase, and turned away to attack others.

Thus in the first place she saved her life by the action, and was enabled to get clear off from the battle; while further, it fell out that in the very act of doing the king an injury she raised herself to a greater height than ever in his esteem. For

as Xerxes beheld the fight, he remarked (it is said) the destruction of the vessel, whereupon the bystanders observed to him: "Do you see, master, how well Artemisia fights, and how she has just sunk a ship of the enemy?" Then Xerxes asked if it was really Artemisia's doing; and they answered: "Certainly; for they knew her ensign": while all made sure that the sunken vessel belonged to the opposite side. Everything, it is said, conspired to prosper the queen—it was especially fortunate for her that not one of those on board the Kalyndian ship survived to become her accuser. Xerxes, they say, in reply to the remarks made to him, observed: "My men have behaved like women, my women like men!"

viii. 87 (Rawlinson).

The Persian losses were very heavy. "Never in one day died such a host, such tale untold of men." But

of the Greeks there died only a few; for, as they were able to swim, all those that were not slain outright by the enemy escaped from the sinking vessels and swam across to Salamis. But on the side of the foreigners more perished by drowning than in any other way, since they did not know how to swim. The great destruction took place when the ships which had been first engaged began to fly; for they who were stationed in the rear, anxious to display their valour before the eyes of the king, made every effort to force their way to the front, and thus became entangled with such of their own vessels as were retreating.

In this confusion the following event occurred: Certain Phœnicians belonging to the ships which had thus perished made their appearance before the king, and laid the blame of their loss on the Ionians, declaring that they were traitors, and had wilfully destroyed the vessels. But the upshot of this complaint was, that the Ionian captains escaped the death which threatened them, while their Phœnician accusers received death as their reward. For it happened that, exactly as they spoke, a Samothracian vessel bore down on an Athenian and sank it, but was attacked and crippled immediately by one of the Æginetan squadron. Now the Samothracians were expert with the javelin, and aimed their weapons so well, that they cleared the deck of the vessel which had disabled their own, after which they sprang on board, and took it. This saved the Ionians. Xerxes, when he saw the exploit, turned fiercely on the Phœnicians—he was ready, in his extreme vexation, to find fault with anyone—and ordered their heads to be cut off, to prevent them, he said, from casting the blame of their own misconduct upon braver men.

During the whole time of the battle Xerxes sate at the base of the hill called *Ægaleôs*, over against Salamis; and whenever he saw any of his own captains perform any worthy exploit he inquired concerning him; and the man's name was taken down by his scribes, together with the names of his father and his city.

HERODOTUS, viii. 89-90 (Rawlinson).

When the fleet was routed the large body of picked Persian troops that had occupied the island of *Psytaleia* was doomed. Escape was impossible. A body of Athenian hoplites, which landed under the command of *Aristeides*, surrounded them and killed them to a man. *Æschylus* described the unequal fight. The Persian messenger, after telling of the ruin of the fleet continues:

Know well, but half-told yet is our disaster.
Such visitation came on them of woe

As to outweigh twice over all I spake.

Atossa. Now what mischance could come more dire than this?
O tell what visitation meanest thou,
Weighted with heavier doom, that smote the host.

Messenger. All that of Persia's sons were goodliest,
In heart most valiant, first in pride of birth,
And to the King's self chief in loyalty,
By piteous and inglorious doom have died.

Atossa. Woe's me for this dire visitation, friends!
By what doom did these perish, sayest thou?

Messenger. An isle there is that fronteth Salamis' coast,
Small, where no ship finds haven, and its beach
By Pan is haunted, lover of the dance.
Hither our King sent these, that when our foes
From shattered ships should flee unto the isle,
They might, as in a trap, slay Hellas' host,
And from the swift sea-currents rescue friends—
Ill boding that which should be!—for when God
Gave that sea-battle's glory to the Greeks,
On that same day they lapped their limbs in mail
Of gleaming bronze, leapt from their ships, beset
The isle all round, to the end these might not know
Which way to face. With stones from hands of foes
On all sides battered were they: arrows leapt
From twanging bowstrings aye, and smote them dead.
Last, with one surge-sweep charging burst o'er them
The Hellenes, stabbing, hacking wretched limbs,
Till they had torn out life from each and all.
Then Xerxes shrieked to see that depth of woe:

For full in view of all the host his throne
Stood on a high knoll hard beside the sea.
He rent his vesture, wild and high he wailed.

Persæ, 435-71 (A. S. Way).

Xerxes at once resolved to return to Asia. The Ionians might revolt again, as indeed in the following year they did: and the Hellespont, and the line of retreat must be secured. So the Persian fleet was dispatched at once to guard the bridge, and Xerxes with a part of the army set out by land. Mardonius—the same Mardonius who had conducted the unsuccessful invasion of 492—was left with 300,000 chosen troops to undertake the reduction of Greece.

The Persian fleet was not pursued, and no attempt was made to destroy the bridge, which indeed, as it proved, the winds had already dashed to pieces. It was better that Xerxes should get away. In after years Themistokles was to pretend that he had a claim upon his gratitude for having persuaded the Greeks not to interfere with his retreat, but that had never been his purpose, nor had he played the traitor in the great and fortunate days when he led the Athenian fleet to victory. And now with solemn words he gave the praise to Heaven. "Be sure," he said to the assembled captains, "we have not done this by our own might. It is the work of gods and heroes, who were jealous that one man should be king at once of Europe and of Asia"—[Herodotus, viii. 109].

CHAPTER XII

PLATÆA AND MYKALE

SALAMIS worked an amazing deliverance from immediate peril, but it was not a final deliverance. The Persian army was still present in Greece, still undefeated, still enormously superior in numbers, and it had the great advantage of an undivided command. The Greek states were not at one. Sparta was as selfish as ever: and Athens—for all her heroism and devotion,—would she endure undaunted a second invasion, a second ravaging, which must come if Sparta would not send an army through the Isthmus into Bœotia to cover her?

Mardonius resolved to tempt her. If he could win her fleet to his side the command of the sea would be his, and the rest would be easy. Accordingly in the spring of 479 he sent Alexander of Macedon, an old friend of Athens, to put his offer before her. It was as generous as he could make it. Xerxes, he said, would extend her territories, give her indeed whatever land she liked, and would rebuild all her temples; and Athens should be a free ally of Persia, not a subject state.

Would Athenian patriotism be proof against such temptation? The Spartans, who never understood the motives that then inspired Athens, were greatly afraid that it would not; so they too sent envoys with offers for her consideration. "We feel," they said, "for the heavy calamities which press on you—the loss of your

harvest these two years, and the ruin in which your homes have lain for so long a time. We offer you, therefore, on the part of the Lacedæmonians and the allies, sustenance for your women, and for the unwarlike portion of your households, so long as the war lasts. Be ye not seduced by Alexander the Macedonian"—[Herodotus, viii. 142]. But Athens needed no Spartan counsel to stiffen her against the voice of the tempter. She loved liberty too well to pawn it. The one councillor who, when later Mardonius sent a second envoy, spoke in favour of surrender was stoned to death; and the very women, when they heard of his proposal and his fate, rose up and stoned to death his wife and children in their exile at Salamis. Yet what she did, she did with eyes wide open. She did not underrate the power of Persia, and she knew only too well that "it was the Spartan temper to say one thing and do another"—[ibid., ix. 54]; but her answer was high and clear. She bade Alexander tell Mardonius that "so long as the sun keeps his present course we will never join alliance with Xerxes. Nay we shall oppose him unceasingly." In the same high spirit the Roman Senate was to answer Hannibal. It is the spirit in which Europe has always replied to the age-long aggression of the East. Though during the last two hundred years the tide has turned, Europe is small; the East is a vast reservoir of men; and the dams may not hold for ever.

To the Spartans, Athens replied that "not all the gold that the whole earth contains—not the fairest and most fertile of all lands—would bribe us to take part with the Medes and help them to enslave our countrymen." She thanked them for their offer, but she would endure as she might, and would not be burdensome to them. "Be it *your* care," she added, "with all speed to lead out your troops; for . . . the

foreigner will not wait long before he invades our territory. . . . Now then is the time for us, before he enters Attica, to go forth ourselves into Bœotia, and give him battle"—[Herodotus, viii. 144].

Sparta promised to send the troops—promised, and once more broke her word. There was yet another festival—and (stronger motive) the wall across the Isthmus was finished.

Meanwhile the Persians once more marched on Athens, and once more the Athenians withdrew to Salamis and the ships. But now they sent ambassadors to Sparta to reproach her. She had promised help and had not sent it. Would she not send it now? What would become of her if they were compelled by her desertion to make terms with Mardonius? For ten days no answer was forthcoming. Then a Tegean ally at last convinced the Spartans that their wall would be useless if Mardonius could employ the Athenian ships to move his troops, and hurriedly, by night, without a word, they dispatched the largest force of Spartan citizens that ever left Sparta at one time for foreign service. Five thousand Spartan hoplites marched, each with seven light-armed Helots in attendance; it was safer to take them than to leave them behind. Contingents from the other Peloponnesian cities joined the army as it advanced, and finally at Eleusis the Athenians, 8000 of them, with 600 Plataeans, came in from Salamis under Aristeides. Herodotus says that the army was 110,000 strong, exactly; but his numbers are not always to be relied upon. It was, however, undoubtedly the largest army that the Greeks ever assembled as a free people. But it had no cavalry, an arm in which the Persians were strong; and it would be necessary to avoid the level ground which would give horsemen dangerous opportunities against its flanks and rear.

In command of this great army was the Spartan

Pausanias, who was regent for his cousin Pleistarchus, the youthful son of Leonidas.¹

The arrival of the Greeks at Eleusis compelled Mardonius to withdraw from Athens. If he stayed he would be cut off from his base at Thebes, and Attica, twice ravaged, could not possibly feed his army. So after burning and destroying whatever Xerxes had spared, he moved his army away to the north-east, and marched by Dekelea and Tanagra—the easiest route for his cavalry—to the plain of the river Asopus in Bœotia.

The Greeks did not follow him, but at Eleusis turned north and, crossing the mountain barrier of Kithæron by the track that ran by Eleutheræ from Athens to Thebes, emerged from the pass on the Bœotian side near Erythræ, where, as they deployed westward along the ridge towards Plataæ, the Persian army would come into view on the farther bank of the Asopus in the Bœotian plain.

The Spartans and Tegeans on the right wing above Erythræ, and the other Peloponnesians in the centre on the broken ground about Plataæ, occupied positions which Mardonius could not attack with any hope of success; but the Athenians and Megarians on the left lay on lower and more level ground across the road from Plataæ to Thebes, and the Megarians at the extremity of the line appeared to be open to attack by the cavalry—an attack which might draw the rest of the Greek army down into the plain. With that object Mardonius "sent all his cavalry under Masistius to attack them where they were. Now Masistius was a man of much repute among the Persians, and rode a Nisæan charger with a golden bit, and otherwise magnificently caparisoned. So the horse advanced against the Greeks, and made attacks upon them in

¹ The other king, Leotychildês, was in command of the fleet.

divisions, doing them great damage at each charge, and insulting them by calling them women"—[Herodotus, ix. 20].

The Megarians, hard pressed, sent a message to Pausanias begging for help, and three hundred Athenian hoplites, and all the archers, came to their relief. A fortunate arrow wounded the horse of Masistius, which reared and threw him, and he was killed before he could be rescued, and indeed before his mishap was noticed. There was a hard fight for his body, which ended in favour of the Greeks, and the cavalry withdrew. "When they reached the camp, Mardonius and all the Persian army made great lamentation for Masistius. They shaved off all the hair from their own heads, and cut the manes from their war-horses and their sumpter-beasts, while they vented their grief in such loud cries that all Bœotia resounded with the clamour, because they had lost the man who, next to Mardonius, was held in the greatest esteem, both by the king and by the Persians generally"—[ibid., ix. 24].

The Greeks were encouraged by the result of the skirmish, and Pausanias moved his whole army past Erythræ and Hysia down into the lower ground, perhaps with the intention of cutting the Persians off from their base at Thebes. If so he failed, and Mardonius, by occupying the passes over Kithæron behind the Greeks, severed their communications. The Greek army was now drawn up "nation by nation, close by the fountain Gargaphia, and the sacred precinct of the Hero Androkrates, partly along some hillocks of no great height, and partly upon the level of the plain"—[ibid., ix. 25]. In this position it was exposed to a rain of arrows and darts from the Persian horse-archers and other mounted troops, to whom the slow-moving lines of hoplites could make no reply. To make matters worse the fountain of Gargaphia, on which the Greeks

depended for water, was choked up and spoiled, and as Mardonius held the passes in their rear, the provision trains upon which they relied could not reach them. One convoy indeed of 500 baggage animals had been cut off and destroyed already. The army was in grave peril, and at a council of war it was decided to retire by night to a position called "The Island" between two branches of the little river Oëroë, where water would be available, and where the army would be less exposed to the cavalry. From that position, too, it could probably regain the command of the passes over Kithæron, and open the way to the food convoys which were now held up on the other side.

The movement, however, was badly carried out. The centre for some reason went too far, and did not halt until it had reached the temple of Hera just outside the walls of Platæa. The Spartans, on the other hand, for a long time did not move at all. They were delayed by an obstinate captain who refused to stir because the Spartan tradition forbade him to turn his back upon an enemy, and he would not disgrace his country by doing so.

Meanwhile the Athenians, "knowing that it was the Spartan temper to say one thing and do another, remained quiet in their station until the army began to retreat, when they dispatched a horseman to see whether the Spartans really meant to set forth, or whether after all they had no intention of moving. The horseman was also to ask Pausanias what he wished the Athenians to do"—[Herodotus, ix. 54]. When at last, just before dawn, the Spartans did move, the Athenians moved too, but lost touch.

As soon as it was light Mardonius saw that the Greek position had been abandoned, and that their forces were divided. The opportunity seemed favourable, and he resolved to force a battle. The cavalry were sent on

to hold the Lacedæmonians, and Mardonius with the infantry followed to support them. At first the battle went ill for Greece.

As the Lacedæmonians were about to engage with Mardonius and the troops under him, they made ready to offer sacrifice. The victims, however, for some time were not favourable; and, during the delay, many fell on the Spartan side, and a still greater number were wounded. For the Persians had made a rampart of their wicker shields, and shot from behind them such clouds of arrows, that the Spartans were sorely distressed. The victims continued unpropitious; till at last Pausanias raised his eyes to the Heræum of the Plateans, and calling the goddess to his aid, besought her not to disappoint the hopes of the Greeks.

As he offered his prayer, the Tegeans, advancing before the rest, rushed forward against the enemy; and the Lacedæmonians, who had obtained favourable omens the moment that Pausanias prayed, at length, after their long delay, advanced to the attack; while the Persians, on their side, left shooting, and prepared to meet them. At first the combat was at the wicker shields. Afterwards, when these were swept down, a fierce contest took place by the side of the temple of Ceres, which lasted long, and ended in a hand-to-hand struggle. The foreigners many times seized hold of the Greek spears and brake them; for in boldness and warlike spirit the Persians were not a whit inferior to the Greeks; but they were without bucklers, untrained, and far below their enemy in respect of skill in arms. Sometimes singly, sometimes in bodies of ten, now fewer and now more in number, they dashed forward upon the Spartan ranks, and so perished.

The fight went most against the Greeks, where Mardonius, mounted upon a white horse, and surrounded by the bravest of all the Persians, the thousand picked men, fought in person. So long as Mardonius was alive, this body resisted all attacks, and, while they defended their own lives, struck down no small number of Spartans; but after Mardonius fell, and the troops with him, which were the main strength of the army, perished, the remainder yielded to the Lacedæmonians, and took to flight. Their light clothing, and want of bucklers, were of the greatest hurt to them: for they had to contend against men heavily armed, while they themselves were without any such defence.

HERODOTUS, ix. 61-3 (Rawlinson).

As soon as Pausanias was attacked he sent an

urgent message to the Athenians to ask for their assistance, but the Thebans and other medizing Greeks who were opposite to them in the Persian line at once attacked them, and there was some hard fighting before they were beaten off and fled to Thebes.

Meanwhile the Persians had taken refuge in their fortified camp across the Asopus, where they hurriedly set about strengthening their defences.

When the Lacedæmonians arrived, a sharp fight took place at the rampart. So long as the Athenians were away, the foreigners kept off their assailants, and had much the best of the combat, since the Lacedæmonians were unskilled in the attack of walled places: but on the arrival of the Athenians, a more violent assault was made, and the wall was for a long time attacked with fury. In the end the valour of the Athenians and their perseverance prevailed—they gained the top of the wall, and, breaking a breach through it, enabled the Greeks to pour in. The first to enter here were the Tegeans, and they it was who plundered the tent of Mardonius; where among other booty they found the manger from which his horses ate, all made of solid brass, and well worth looking at. This manger was given by the Tegeans to the temple of Athene Alea, while the remainder of their booty was brought into the common stock of the Greeks. As soon as the wall was broken down, the foreigners no longer kept together in any array, nor was there one among them who thought of making further resistance—in good truth, they were all half dead with fright, huddled as so many thousands were into so narrow and confined a space. With such tameness did they submit to be slaughtered by the Greeks, that of the 300,000 men who composed the army—omitting the 40,000 by whom Artabazus¹ was accompanied in his flight—no more than 3000 outlived the battle.

HERODOTUS, ix. 70 (Rawlinson).

Æschylus in *The Persæ* makes the spirit of Darius prophecy:

So huge a slaughter-oozing swath shall load
Platea's soil, reaped by the Dorian spear.
To the third generation heaps of dead,

¹ Artabazus, the Persian second-in-command, refused to engage, and withdrew his own division from the field, and with all speed from Greece.

Dumb mouths, shall speak unto the eyes of men
 This: "Overweening let not mortal be;
 For proud presumption's flower hath for fruit
 Infatuate sin, whose harvest is all tears.

Zeus sits above, a chastener of thoughts
 Exceeding proud, a stern inquisitor."

ÆSCHYLUS, *Persæ*, 816-22, 827-8 (A. S. Way).

The Persian defeat was decisive. Neither Xerxes nor his successors ever attempted again to invade Greece, not even when for nearly thirty years Athens and Sparta were at each other's throats. The tide of invasion was to turn the other way. The wealth of Persia, and its military inferiority, were to prove a strong temptation, which 150 years later drew Alexander the Great into Asia for the conquest of the empire.

On the very day of Plataea the Greek fleet won another great victory on the Ionian coast at Cape Mykalê near Miletus. In the early part of the season both fleets had been inactive. The Phœnicians had gone home in disgust and resentment at the way in which they had been treated after Salamis, and the Persian fleet of about 400 sail that now gathered at Samos to cover Ionia was greatly weakened by their departure, and by the unreliability of the Ionian contingent. It would be well content if the Greeks did not come to look for it. On the other hand the Greek fleet of 110 vessels, which assembled at Ægina under the Spartan king Leotychidês, showed equal hesitation. It advanced to Delos, but though envoys from Ionia begged for help, and pledged their cities to revolt, Leotychidês would go no farther. Spartan kings were notoriously unenterprising upon the sea. For fifteen years Ionia had been a Persian province, and the Greeks had kept away from those waters. The dangers of the unknown were magnified. In their imagination the coast swarmed with Persian troops; and "as for

Samos," says Herodotus with ironical exaggeration, "it appeared as far off as the Pillars of Hercules!" —[viii. 132].

But it can hardly be doubted that if the Athenians, who were now commanded by Xanthippus, the father of Perikles, and not by Themistokles, had wished to cross the Ægean, they would have done so without hesitation, and would have carried the rest of the fleet with them. But the Athenians had a good reason for leaving the Persian fleet alone. It was just as well that Sparta should be afraid of it, and exaggerate its power to do her mischief. Then she would look to the Athenian fleet for help, and perhaps would give help by land in return. She might never come outside the Isthmus if she knew that the Persian ships could no longer hurt her. When Pausanias entered Bœotia, the reason for Athenian inactivity was removed, and the fleet sailed. Herodotus [ix. 91] says that Leotychidês was persuaded to move by the happy omen of a name. The principal Samian envoy had just made a very moving appeal for help. Leotychidês asked him his name, and when the reply came that it was Hegesistratus, or "army-leader," he exclaimed, "I accept, O Samian! the omen which thy name affords," and resolved to sail for Samos. But one may suspect that there had been clever management, and that Themistokles was not the only Athenian who knew how to manage a superstitious and dilatory Spartan admiral.

When the Greeks reached Samos they found that the Persian fleet had been withdrawn. Salamis had taken all the fight out of it, and the ships had been dragged ashore at Cape Mykalê. The Persians cut down the trees, even the precious fruit-trees, for timber to make a barricade about them, and an army of 60,000 men was drawn up upon the shore to cover them. There was no hesitation in the Greek fleet now. But

first Leotychidês sailed along the shore, and by the mouth of a loud-voiced herald called on the Ionians to revolt. It was enough. The Persians dared no longer trust them. They disarmed the Samians, and sent the Milesians to the rear to guard the mountain paths, by which, if defeated, they would retire. Then the Greeks landed, and the Athenians attacked with the utmost dash. Afterwards men said that they were cheered by a rumour, which flew through the host, that the army in Bœotia had won a great victory that day over Mardonius. "Many things prove to me," said Herodotus, "that the gods take part in the affairs of man. How else, when the battles of Mykalê and Plataea were about to happen on the self-same day, should such a rumour have reached the Greeks in that region, greatly cheering the whole army, and making them more eager than before to risk their lives"—[ix. 100].

As at Plataea the Persians made a breastwork of their wicker shields, and for a time fought well behind it, but then the Athenians and some Peloponnesian troops broke through—the Lacedæmonians, who had farther to go, had not yet got up—and

pressed so closely on the steps of their flying foes, that they entered along with them into the fortress. And now, when even their fortress was taken, the foreigners no longer offered resistance, but fled hastily away, all save only the Persians. They still continued to fight in knots of a few men against the Greeks, who kept pouring into the intrenchment. . . .

The Samians, who served with the Medes, and who, although disarmed, still remained in the camp, seeing from the very beginning of the fight that the victory was doubtful, did all that lay in their power to render help to the Greeks. And the other Ionians likewise, beholding their example, revolted and attacked the Persians.

As for the Milesians, who had been ordered, for the better security of the Persians, to guard the mountain paths—that, in case any accident befell them such as had now happened, they might not lack guides to conduct them into the high tracts of Mykalê—and who had also been removed to hinder them from making an outbreak in the Persian camp; they,

instead of obeying their orders, broke them in every respect. For they guided the flying Persians by wrong roads, which brought them into the presence of the enemy; and at last they set upon them with their own hands, and showed themselves the hottest of their adversaries. Ionia, therefore, on this day revolted a second time from the Persians. . . .

When they had burnt the rampart and the vessels, the Greeks sailed away to Samos, and there took counsel together concerning the Ionians, whom they thought of removing out of Asia. Ionia they proposed to abandon to the foreigners; and their doubt was, in what part of their own possessions in Greece they should settle its inhabitants. For it seemed to them a thing impossible that they should be ever on the watch to guard and protect Ionia; and yet otherwise there could be no hope that the Ionians would escape the vengeance of the Persians. Hereupon the Peloponnesian leaders proposed that the seaport towns of such Greeks as had sided with the Medes should be taken away from them, and made over to the Ionians. The Athenians, on the other hand, were very unwilling that any removal at all should take place, and disliked the Peloponnesians holding councils concerning their colonists. So, as they set themselves against the change, the Peloponnesians yielded with a good will. Hereupon the Samians, Chians, Lesbians, and other islanders, who had helped the Greeks at this time, were received into the league of the allies; and took the oaths, binding themselves to be faithful, and not desert the common cause. Then the Greeks sailed away to the Hellespont, where they meant to break down the bridges, which they supposed to be still extended across the strait.

HERODOTUS, ix. 102-6 (Rawlinson).

CHAPTER XIII

THE GROWTH OF THE ATHENIAN EMPIRE

WITH the defeat of Persia we enter upon a new era, under the guidance of a new historian, Thucydides; and this is how he introduces us to it: "The confederates repulsed the foreigner: but not long afterwards they and the Greeks who had thrown off the Persian yoke grouped themselves into two parties, one round the Athenians and one round the Lacedæmonians. For these two states had been shown to be the most powerful: the strength of the one was on the land and that of the other in her ships"—[i. 18].

It has been said of Thucydides that "he is almost more modern than ourselves"; and another writer has remarked that "the portion of history dealt with by Thucydides is only ancient in the sense that the events related happened a long while ago; in all other respects it is more modern than the history of our own countrymen in the Middle Ages." Many of the intellectual, scientific, political and social problems of the Athenian of the middle of the fifth century B.C. still exercise our minds. His mental attitude towards them was very much the same as ours. He would understand us and we should understand him. William the Conqueror, or Thomas à Becket, or the Black Prince, would for the most part have understood neither him nor us; and where dimly they did understand they would have regarded us both as dangerous heretics in the spheres of religion and politics alike, whose mouths should be

sealed lest we should infect society, and bring Church and State to sheer disaster. Freedom as we understand it, and as the Athenian understood it, was unknown in England before 1688, and only very imperfectly realised until the nineteenth century was well advanced.

The date of Thucydides' birth is not exactly known. Conjectures vary between 471 B.C. and about 460. The former date would make him fourteen years younger than Herodotus: in mental outlook, however, he was whole ages later. Herodotus told a story for public recitation, a story that would please the general ear, as Homer does. Thucydides was a philosophic historian. He did not merely record facts; he examined their meaning. His book is for the student, for those who would be statesmen. "The absence of romance in my history," he said, "will, I fear, detract somewhat from its interest; but if it be judged useful by those inquirers who desire an exact knowledge of the past as an aid to the interpretation of the future, which in the course of human things must resemble if it does not reflect it, I shall be content. In fine, I have written my work, not as an essay which is to win the applause of the moment, but as a possession for all time"—[i. 22 (Crawley, in Dent's Temple Classics)]. It is plain—a studied correction of two mistakes a few sentences earlier leaves no doubt—that he had Herodotus in mind, Herodotus who, often inaccurate, never scientific, but always fascinating, and a peerless story-teller, is, contrary to his expectation, as immortal as himself.

Something of the extraordinary educational influences that were at work upon the minds of Thucydides' generation we shall see later. He was a patriotic Athenian, devoted to his beloved city, as were so many brilliant men in that most brilliant age; yet his history is a model of impartiality. Like all the great Greeks he searched with a single heart for the truth of things.

Few historians even of the nineteenth century aimed as simply at truth as he did. To this day history is still written too often to serve some cause: facts are viewed from a party standpoint, and conclusions are coloured by political attachments. Like Dr. Johnson, who in writing his accounts of the debates in the House of Commons could not bear, as he frankly said, to let the Whig dogs get the best of it, and Lord Macaulay, who could find no virtue or wisdom in the Tories, historians are too often party men. Truth knows nothing of party, and Thucydides ignores it. He ignores all personal considerations. Though he held a high command in the Peloponnesian War, and had the misfortune to lose an important strategic position, for which he was broken and exiled, he tells the story of those events, that meant so much to him, quietly, without comment, in the third person, as if he had no concern with them. That is the judicial, the scientific way of treating facts. That Thucydides suffered had no bearing on them. He knew that it was so, and said nothing. What an incomparable lesson for us; how unforgettable once read!

It was inevitable that Athenians and Spartans should drift apart. "What centuries have put asunder two summers' fighting cannot bind fast." There were so many points of difference between them. By long tradition as Ionians and Dorians they were enemies: by education and temperament they differed as much as Cavalier and Puritan: their political ideals were as the poles asunder. Sparta was oligarchical and reactionary; thought was not free; originality was suspect; the beautiful was dangerous; at all points the individual was in bondage to authority. Athens was democratic and progressive; freedom of spirit was as the breath of life to her; truth and beauty were magnets that attracted irresistibly; new experience was desir-

able, for that way might lie the light and the knowledge towards which so many eager minds were straining.

These two peoples would certainly not think alike upon questions of foreign policy. What, for example, were the Ionians to Sparta? Had not the Dorians of old driven them before them? If they did not like the Persian rule, let them pack up and leave Asia. To the Athenian the sorrows of Miletus, and of all the oppressed Ionians east of the Ægean, were as his own. When the Persian fleet was destroyed at Mykalê the first thought of the Spartans was to go home, "for it seemed to them a thing impossible that they should be ever on the watch to guard and protect Ionia." They had neither the men nor the money for the task. But to the Athenian it was not only not impossible, it was the first and only thing to do. That an empire of the Ægean—an empire to be administered by a democracy, the first that there had ever been—would grow about the mother city if now she did her duty, none foresaw, unless perhaps Themistokles. "Like other great things the Athenian Empire was the child of necessity, and its creators did not know what they were doing." A British Empire grew in the same way.

True, the Spartans and other Peloponnesians did sail with the Athenians to the Hellespont, but as soon as they discovered that the bridge had been destroyed, that to them was all that mattered, and they left Athens to her task.

But already an old jealousy that had smouldered through the war was bursting into flames again. Ægina and Corinth, who a few years before had known Athens as an equal, were envious and disturbed to see how utterly she had outstripped them. She was now by far the greatest sea-power in Greece, and already the Ionians were gathering about her, adding largely to her resources in money, men and ships. And another

thing was happening that to them was full of omen. Athens was surrounding herself with seven miles of wide and lofty wall. She would be impregnable, lording it by land as well as sea. It was Themistokles, of course, who inspired the Athenians to this vast undertaking. But he had little difficulty. Had they not twice within two years been driven by the Persians to fly for refuge to Salamis? The Persians might come again, or her neighbours might combine against her. They had walls—all but the Spartans—and she would have them, too. So the people set to work. The wall came first. That done, they could turn at leisure to the rebuilding of their ruined dwellings.

But Corinth and Ægina took alarm, and without delay they went to Sparta and urged her to stop the work. So the Spartans sent an embassy to Athens to put forward what arguments they could against wall-building in general. How excellent for all to be unwallled as they were! Let Athens join with them in throwing down all walls—at least all walls outside the Peloponnese: they only made strong places for the Persians, as Thebes had done. A third invasion was not impossible. How much safer, if it came, for all to retire within the Isthmus! Athens was unmoved, but she could not say so yet. Spartan troops might come before the walls were built. Time must be won somehow—time to raise the walls high enough for defence, before Sparta should know that it was done. Themistokles was more than a match for slow-moving Spartan wits. So, after the Spartans had spoken, the Athenians, at his suggestion, sent them away with the answer that they would send ambassadors to Sparta to discuss the question. Now Themistokles was in high favour at Sparta. He had done more than any one man to save Greece, and they had honoured him as no man not a citizen of Sparta had ever been honoured before. He

would lie and fool them, till the wall was high enough, and they would believe him. So he

told the Athenians to send him off with all speed to Lacedæmon, but not to despatch his colleagues as soon as they had selected them, but to wait until they had raised their wall to the height from which defence was possible. Meanwhile the whole population in the city was to labour at the wall, the Athenians, their wives and their children, sparing no edifice, private or public, which might be of any use to the work, but throwing all down. After giving these instructions, and adding that he would be responsible for all other matters there, he departed. Arrived at Lacedæmon he did not seek an audience with the authorities, but tried to gain time and made excuses. When any of the government asked him why he did not appear in the assembly, he would say that he was waiting for his colleagues, who had been detained in Athens by some engagement; however, that he expected their speedy arrival, and wondered that they were not yet there. At first the Lacedæmonians trusted the words of Themistokles, through their friendship for him; but when others arrived, all distinctly declaring that the work was going on and already attaining some elevation, they did not know how to disbelieve it. Aware of this, he told them that rumours are deceptive, and should not be trusted; they should send some reputable persons from Sparta to inspect, whose report might be trusted. They dispatched them accordingly. Concerning these Themistokles secretly sent word to the Athenians to detain them as far as possible without putting them under open constraint, and not to let them go until they had themselves returned. For his colleagues had now joined him, Abronichus, son of Lysikles, and Aristides, son of Lysimachus, with the news that the wall was sufficiently advanced; and he feared that when the Lacedæmonians heard the facts, they might refuse to let them go. So the Athenians detained the envoys according to his message, and Themistokles had an audience with the Lacedæmonians, and at last openly told them that Athens was now fortified sufficiently to protect its inhabitants; that any embassy which the Lacedæmonians or their allies might wish to send to them, should in future proceed on the assumption that the people to whom they were going was able to distinguish both its own and the general interests. That when the Athenians thought fit to abandon their city and to embark in their ships, they ventured on that perilous step without consulting them; and that on the other hand, wherever they had deliberated with the Lacedæmonians, they had proved

themselves to be in judgment second to none. That they now thought it fit that their city should have a wall, and that this would be more for the advantage of both the citizens of Athens and the Hellenic confederacy; for without equal military strength it was impossible to contribute equal or fair counsel to the common interest. It followed, he observed, either that all the members of the confederacy should be without walls, or that the present step should be considered a right one.

THUCYDIDES, i. 90, 91 (Crawley).

The Spartans, when they saw how they had been tricked, showed no open resentment; but they never forgave Themistokles for tricking them—as later he was to discover.

In this way [continues Thucydides], the Athenians walled their city in a little while. To this day¹ the building shows signs of the haste of its execution; the foundations are laid of stones of all kinds, and in some places not wrought or fitted, but placed just in the order in which they were brought by the different hands; and many columns, too, from tombs and sculptured stones were put in with the rest. For the bounds of the city were extended at every point of the circumference; and so they laid hands on everything without exception in their haste.

Ibid., i. 93 (Crawley).

It was a great disadvantage to Athens that she lay at some distance from the sea. For times had changed. "The old towns," says Thucydides, "on account of the great prevalence of piracy, were built away from the sea, whether on the islands or the continent, and still remain in their old sites"—[i. 7]. The bay of Phalerum, with its open, shelving beach, three miles away from Athens, was the only shelter her fleet had before the invasion. That was no harbour for a great naval power with an empire such as Themistokles dreamed of. It was defenceless. West of the bay lay a rocky peninsula, on the western side of which was a natural basin, the future harbour of Peiræus, which

¹ After their destruction by the Spartans in 404.

moles and a chain would make secure. Themistokles had advised the fortification of the peninsula before the Persian War; the people had then approved the scheme, and they now gave effect to it. On the eastern side were the smaller basins of Munychia and Zea, which were similarly protected, and another seven miles of wall was built to enclose the whole peninsula.

The fleet would now be five miles away instead of three; and Themistokles would have liked to abandon the old city, and move to Peiræus. It would have been a most wise step to take. But sentiment was too strong: the old rock of the Acropolis was too sacred: five miles was just not too far, and the move was never made. So there were two towns within five miles of each other to fortify and defend instead of one. Twenty years later, when war with Sparta loomed ahead, the Athenians could no longer run the risk that an invading army might cut them off from their fleet and the seaport that fed them, and more walls—the famous Long Walls—had to be built in 458 at a great cost. If the capital had been built, as Themistokles wanted, at Peiræus, it would have been defended much more easily, with less cost, by a much smaller force, and more men would have been released for service with the fleet.

When the Lacedæmonians sailed home from the Hellespont, the Athenians at once set about the difficult and tedious siege of Sestos. Lying on the northern side of the straits, and strongly fortified, it was the key of the Hellespont, and was defended by the Persians with determination. Farther east Byzantium,¹ which commanded the Bosphorus, was also strongly held. Until those two towns had been recaptured, communication with the Black Sea and the

¹ The later Constantinople.

many Greek colonies, and the great corn-bearing country about its shores—a country where then as now men “grew corn not to eat but to sell”—would be impossible. Before Athens lay the same necessity, the same military problem, that lay before us when in the spring of 1915 we assailed the Dardanelles. And she succeeded where we failed. The capture of Sestos was long delayed, but at last, when winter was at hand, it fell to famine, and the Athenians were able to get home to their families and their ruined city. With them they carried away the huge cables that had supported the bridge of Xerxes, as a trophy to adorn the Acropolis.

In the following year (478) an allied fleet sailed under Pausanias (for the Peloponnesians once more took some small part), and after expelling the Persians from most of the cities of Cyprus went north to Byzantium to complete the work which the Athenians had begun in the previous autumn. The city was taken, and in it were captured a number of leading Persians, among them kinsmen of Xerxes.

And now Pausanias was to show all the instability of the Spartan character. The artificial simplicity of Spartan life was not proof against the temptations to which he was exposed. His victory and the immense spoil that had fallen to his lot had turned his head. He was abroad, and like so many leading Spartans, he ceased to observe the Spartan laws as soon as he was outside Sparta. But he was not content with pride and pomp and luxury: ambition prompted him to traitorous courses. He entered into secret correspondence with Xerxes, and to win his favour he allowed the prisoners who had been taken at Byzantium to escape. It was discovered later that he had even proposed to marry a daughter of Xerxes, to betray Greece to him, and to rule it as his viceroy. His childish vanity was his

undoing, for he, a Spartan, began to wear Persian clothing, to copy the ways of Persian nobles, and to surround himself with orientals as guards and attendants. Free Greeks could not tolerate such conduct in their general, and the Spartans recalled him in the year 477, and with him apparently their ships. He continued his intrigues with Persia as a private citizen for some years, but he was at last detected, and was walled up in a chamber of a temple to which he had fled for refuge, and there slowly starved to death.

A year or two after the battle of Mykalé, King Leotychidês also disgraced himself. He had been sent with an army into Thessaly to punish the pro-Persian party there, but accepted bribes from them, and being detected had to fly for his life, and spent the rest of his days in exile.

The effect of foreign service upon their generals and admirals caused the Spartans much uneasiness, and was another reason why they were the more ready to leave the conduct of the war with Persia to the Athenians. They sent indeed another admiral to take up the command of the allied fleet in the room of Pausanias, but on his arrival he found that a great change had taken place. The Ionians knew well enough that it was the Athenian fleet that alone stood between them and Persia, and during the absence of the Spartans they put themselves under the command of the Athenian admirals Aristides and Kimon, the son of Miltiades, men of high character, just and conciliatory, who were generally liked and trusted; and when the Spartan admiral appeared they refused to serve under him, and he could only go home again. The other Peloponnesians apparently withdrew with him, and already Greece was in two camps, which would inevitably one day be hostile. Moreover their political sympathies divided them: the

Peloponnesians as we have seen were oligarchical, Athens was democratic, and each would intrigue with the discontented minority in the other's cities, giving always new cause for animosity and eventual war. So Russian Bolsheviks intrigue to-day.

When the Spartans left, the Athenian Empire was born. But those who took this first step towards its foundation, Athenians and Ionians, were not thinking of empire. The power of Persia was still formidable, the danger to Ionia still great. Before Ionia could be safe the Persian must be driven from the seaboard. That was the task that Athens undertook. What the many allied cities and islands thought that they were forming was a confederacy of equals; and they bound themselves by a solemn bond to act together, for "Aristeides made all the people of Greece swear to keep the league, and himself took the oath in the name of the Athenians, flinging wedges of red-hot iron into the sea, after curses against such as should make breach of their vow"—[Plutarch, *Aristeides* (Clough)]. So was formed the Confederacy of Delos. It comprised between two and three hundred independent states. In council each would have one vote, no more. Athens would have no more power than the most insignificant island. Such was the purpose. In an ideal world it might be possible to preserve an equilibrium so unstable: but in a world of grim realities it could not be. Strength and weakness are facts that will not be disguised, or for long ignored. Each member of the confederacy was bound to contribute its due share in ships or money. To Aristeides the Just was committed the delicate task of determining what that share should be, and he did his work so well that his assessment was universally accepted and endured for fifty years—endured until imperial Athens at death-grips with Sparta was constrained to raise it. Many of the states—and as the

years passed their number continually increased—preferred to make their contribution in money instead of in ships. The Asiatic Greeks were no great fighters, and if Athens would do the fighting for them, they were well pleased that she should do it. It was so obviously the right thing on military grounds. The Athenians were making great improvements in ship-building and naval tactics, and a homogeneous fleet would be infinitely superior to a scratch collection of oddments. Before long only the large islands, Lesbos, Chios and Samos, were sending ships to the fleet, and Athens found herself a military chief in receipt of tribute from a large number of dependents. For some years the form of a confederacy was preserved, and the money was spent upon the war, or held in trust for future needs. A council met at the temple of Apollo and Artemis in the island of Delos, a holy place to all Ionians, and there under the care of a number of joint treasurers the rapidly increasing funds of the confederacy were deposited. The conduct of the war did not cost what had been expected. The Athenians contrived to make it largely pay for itself, and the tribute accumulated. Then came a tragic day when the confederacy compelled the city of Karystus in the south of Eubœa to join the league against her will, and another day, and yet another, when by force of arms under Athenian leadership it deprived of independence two important islands, Naxos and Thasos,¹ that sought to cut themselves adrift. A few years later the council of equals ceased to meet at Delos. But the Ægean was safe for traders: neither Persians nor pirates dared show their faces: and Athenian courts did justice to all litigants, and all was well. And then one day it was felt that there was more treasure in Delos than it was safe to leave in a small defenceless

¹ Thasos revolted in 465 and was compelled to surrender in 463.

island, and with general consent on the suggestion of Samos it was removed, probably in 454, to Athens. The confederacy had become an empire: the allies of an earlier day had become subjects: the force of events had converted Athens herself from the first among equals into a "tyrant city." Yet for some years there was very little discontent. Persia's teeth had been drawn, and there were no pirates, and the courts of Athens were just, and it was good to have excuses for visiting that queen of cities, where you might see the splendid buildings that were rising, and listen to the great plays that were being performed, and see and hear the famous Athenians whose names were on all men's lips, and the still more famous thinkers and teachers who gathered there because wisdom, and science, and clear thought, and mastery of language were more highly valued than in any other Greek city. All praise to Athens! The generation that remembered the days of peril and of bondage had not yet passed away.

Though Xerxes had recrossed the Hellespont, and Mardonius and his army had perished at Plataea, the Persians still held important strategic positions in Europe, and one, Eion,¹ at the mouth of the Strymon, was a menace to the Greek cities on the peninsula of Chalkidiké, and blocked the way by land to Thrace and the Hellespont and the food supply of Athens. In 476, the year after Pausanias had been deprived of his command, Kimon led the forces of the confederacy against the town. The Persians made a stout resistance, and so long as their food held out they kept the Greeks at bay. Of the high courage of the Persian governor Herodotus has a tale to tell.

Persian governors [he says] had been established in Thrace and about the Hellespont before the march of Xerxes began;

¹ Close to the Nine Ways, the site of the future Amphipolis.

but these persons, after the expedition was over, were all driven from their towns by the Greeks, except Maskames the governor of Doriskus: no one succeeded in driving out Maskames, though many made the attempt. For this reason gifts are sent him every year by the king who reigns over the Persians.

Of the other governors whom the Greeks drove out, there was not one who, in the judgment of Xerxes, showed himself a brave man, excepting Boges, the governor of Eion. Him Xerxes never could praise enough; and such of his sons as were left in Persia, and survived their father, he very specially honoured. And of a truth this Boges was worthy of great commendation; for when he was besieged by the Athenians under Kimon, the son of Miltiades, and it was open to him to retire from the city upon terms, and return to Asia, he refused, because he feared the king might think he had played the coward to save his own life, wherefore, instead of surrendering, he held out to the last extremity. When all the food in the fortress was gone, he raised a vast funeral pile, slew his children, his wife, his concubines, and his household slaves, and cast them all into the flames. Then, collecting whatever gold and silver there was in the place, he flung it from the walls into the Strymon; and, when that was done, to crown all, he himself leaped into the fire. For this action Boges is with reason praised by the Persians even at the present day.

vii. 106-7.

Then Skyros, a nest of pirates in the middle of the Ægean, was taken in 474. Its inhabitants were reduced to slavery, and Athenian citizens were settled on the land. A most necessary piece of police work had been done, and every merchant sailor would rejoice; but the doing of it had added an island to the Athenian Empire. So, without any sinister purpose, and indeed with general approval, empires grow.

A few years later the powerful island of Naxos revolted, the first to break the solemn covenant. The confederates besieged and took it, and it lost its independence. It too became a subject of Athens. Others revolted later and shared the same fate. They wanted to escape from the payment of tribute or from service with the fleet, "for the Athenians were very severe

and exacting, and made themselves offensive by applying the screw of necessity to men who were not used to, and in fact not disposed for, any continuous labour. In some other respects the Athenians were not the old popular rulers they had been at first; and if they had more than their fair share of service, it was correspondingly easy for them to reduce any that tried to leave the confederacy. For this the allies had themselves to blame; the wish to get off service making most of them arrange to pay their share of the expense in money instead of in ships, and so to avoid having to leave their homes. Thus while Athens was increasing her navy with the funds which they contributed, a revolt always found them without resources or experience for war"—[Thucydides, i. 99 (Crawley)].

While the siege of Naxos was in progress, Themistokles ran the gauntlet of the blockading fleet, as a fugitive on his way to Asia. Party strife at Athens had led to his ostracism in 471. He had fancied himself indispensable, like many a statesman since, and had talked too much about his services to Greece and Athens. It seems probable, too, that he advised peace with Persia, when public opinion was still solidly for war. Trade could not flourish while peaceful intercourse was still impossible with Egypt, and Phœnicia, and much of Asia Minor; and as Themistokles saw things, there was more to be gained by trading with Persia than by robbing her. Athens was to lose a large army, and a fleet and much treasure in Egypt, in 454, before she realised the strength of Persia, and was ready to make terms.

Themistokles was living as an exile in Argos, when the treason of Pausanias was exposed. Argos was an enemy of Sparta, and the crafty versatile Athenian was the last person that Sparta wanted to see established there. He had been in communication with

Pausanias, and though it is unlikely that he had any treasonable purpose against Athens, what he had done could be twisted to his disadvantage, and he was represented as a traitor. His arrest was ordered, and he had to fly. He passed as a fugitive from one country to another under romantic circumstances, until he was driven to the desperate expedient of seeking a refuge in Asia, although Xerxes had set a price upon his head. He crossed the Ægean at the very time when the Athenian squadron was blockading Naxos, and a storm carried the merchantman on which he sailed into its dangerous neighbourhood. But his quick resourcefulness delivered him.

In his alarm—he was luckily unknown to the people in the vessel—he told the master who he was and what he was flying for, and said that, if he refused to save him, he would declare that he was taking him for a bribe. Meanwhile their safety consisted in letting no one leave the ship until a favourable time for sailing should arise. If he complied with his wishes, he promised him a proper recompense. The master acted as he desired, and, after lying-to for a day and a night out of reach of the squadron, at length arrived at Ephesus.

THUCYDIDES, i. 137 (Crawley).

After his arrival he wrote a letter to Artaxerxes, who had recently succeeded his father Xerxes on the throne, "‘I, Themistokles,’ it ran, ‘am come to you, who did your house more harm than any of the Hellenes, when I was compelled to defend myself against your father’s invasion—harm, however, far surpassed by the good that I did him during his retreat, which brought no danger for me but much for him. For the past, you are a good turn in my debt’—here he mentioned the warning sent to Xerxes from Salamis to retreat, as well as his finding the bridges unbroken,¹ which, as he falsely pretended, was

¹ Herodotus, however, tells us that the bridges had been destroyed by storms.

due to him,—‘for the present, able to do you great service, I am here, pursued by the Hellenes for my friendship for you. However, I desire a year’s grace, when I shall be able to declare in person the objects of my coming’”—[Thucydides, i. 137]. The interval he employed in the study of the Persian language and of the customs of the country. When he went up to Susa he was received with favour. Artaxerxes made him governor of the district of Asiatic Magnesia, where he gave him “Magnesia, which brought in fifty talents a year, for bread, Lampsakus, which was considered to be the richest wine country, for wine, and Myos for other provisions”—[ibid., i. 138]. And there in Magnesia he lived and died. “By his own native capacity,” says Thucydides, summing up his character, “he was at once the best judge in those sudden crises which admit of little or no deliberation, and the best prophet of the future, even to its most distant possibilities”—[ibid., i. 138].

In 468 another heavy blow was dealt at the power of Persia, which was showing some inclination to dispute the command of the sea again. Kimon sailed south to Karia and Lykia, and freed the coast towns from Persian rule, and then assailed the Phœnician fleet at the mouth of the river Eurymedon in Pamphylia, and utterly destroyed it; and he followed up his victory on the same day by heavily defeating the Persian army that was drawn up by the shore to support it. The booty was immense, and the towns that were freed became members of the confederacy.

The great victory seems to have affected the political situation at Athens. There would be demobilisation on an extensive scale, and soldiers and sailors would be upon the streets of Athens without employment and without pay. They had votes, and the extremists among the democrats, men of socialist sympathies, would soon

get the upper hand. It also affected the relations between Athens and the Peloponnese. Until Persia suffered the great defeats at the Eurymedon, Sparta had shown no outward hostility to Athens. After the Eurymedon things were different. There could not be another invasion. Greece could safely take up again her old internal quarrels. Athens might be put in her place. The revolt of Thasos in the following year seemed to give an opportunity. The Thasians sought help from Sparta, and the Spartans were secretly preparing to invade Attica when a tremendous earthquake dealt death and ruin through their land. In the confusion which followed the Helots saw their chance and leapt into rebellion. They marched on Sparta, but were defeated in the field, and withdrew to the famous stronghold of Mount Ithomê, round which in the seventh century had centred the long and heroic resistance of their Messenian ancestors to Spartan attempts at conquest. The Spartans, never apt at the reduction of fortified positions, sought assistance from their allies, among whom the Athenians were still numbered. Kimon, always a friend of Sparta, persuaded a somewhat reluctant Athens, which was still ignorant of the intrigues with Thasos, to send him with an army to her help. “Consent not,” he said in the terse Spartan manner, “to see Hellas lamed of one leg, and Athens drawing without her yoke-fellow.” But still Ithomê did not fall, and the Spartans, troubled by uneasy consciences, thought that the Athenians had discovered their treachery, and were not very wishful that it should. So on a clumsy pretext, in ungracious fashion, they sent them home, and, says Thucydides, “the first open quarrel between the Lacedæmonians and Athenians arose out of this expedition”—[i. 102]. For Athens was furious at the treatment of her army, and Kimon’s influence was

destroyed. The extreme democrats, who were anti-Spartan, got the upper hand: the long alliance with Sparta against Persia was broken off: a number of radical reforms were carried through the Assembly, which put what we should now call Labour on an equality with the rich in matters of administration and justice, and found employment as paid jurors for 6000 of them every year: and in 461 Kimon, notwithstanding all his distinguished services to Athens, was ostracised, and banished for ten years.

Henceforth the danger to be feared came from Sparta and the Peloponnese. And if Thebes in the north, whose alliance with Xerxes had discredited her in the eyes of all Greece, should re-establish herself as the leader of Bœotia, and, hating Athens as she did, should ally herself with Sparta, the peril of Attica, between the upper and the nether millstones, would be extreme. So Athens cast about for new alliances.

CHAPTER XIV

SUPREMACY OR DOWNFALL?

YOUNG empires in their pride of growth always excite enemies, and to protect themselves against the threat of hostile combinations they must catch feverishly at each opportunity of dividing those combinations, and of laying their hands upon strategic positions beyond their frontiers which will protect them against invasion. It is an old tale many times retold. But in carrying out this policy it is their fate always to make more enemies, and perhaps to bring still nearer the danger which they seek to escape. Yet to go back is impossible. So Perikles, the son of that Xanthippus who was joint commander with Aristeides, his political opponent, of the Athenian squadron at Mykale and Sestos, told Athens plainly thirty years later, when the Peloponnesian War had broken out. "To recede," he said, "is no longer possible, if indeed any of you in the alarm of the moment has become enamoured of the honesty of such an unambitious part. For what you hold is, to speak somewhat plainly, a tyranny; to take it perhaps was wrong, but to let it go is highly dangerous"—[Thucydides, ii. 63]. There has been no day during the last hundred years when European statesmen have not been troubled by the same alternatives. Can we leave India or Egypt? But Athens was not likely to abandon empire and tribute. The needy ultra-democrats who lived upon the tribute, which provided their public pay, were the most ardent

imperialists. Anything that threatened the empire threatened the principal item in their means of livelihood.

"Father," says the boy in *The Wasps*—

Father, if the Archon say
That the Court won't sit to-day,
Tell me truly, father mine,
Have we wherewithal to dine?

Chorus. Out upon it! out upon it!
Then, indeed, I should not know
For a little bit of supper
Whither in this world to go.

Boy. Why, my mother, didst thou breed me, giving nothing
else to feed me,
But a store of legal woe?

ARISTOPHANES, *Wasps*, 304-14 (Rogers).

The first ally whom Athens sought was Argos, always jealous of Sparta, and an alliance was contracted, which was joined by Thessaly, treacherous and unreliable, as she was to show again, but at this time anti-Spartan. Then there was Megara at odds with Corinth. Both were allies of Sparta, and when Megara sought her help it was refused. What more natural than that she should turn to Athens, or that Athens should receive such overtures with joy? With Megara for an ally—and the ally of to-day might become the subject of to-morrow—Attica was covered against invasion from the Peloponnese, and Sparta and Thebes could not easily join hands, for Megara occupied the Isthmus, and had ports—Pegæ and Nisæa—both on the northern and on the southern sea. Things were going well, or so it seemed. Athens, who already held the key position of Naupaktus, had gained a new grip on the Gulf of Corinth and the sea route to Sicily and the West, the prize that later was to tempt her to her ruin. This threat to Corinthian trade interests in those parts made an enemy of Corinth, and Ægina took alarm again.

The moment seemed favourable for a blow at Athens, for more than half of her fleet was absent on the Nile, whither she had sent out a great expedition in 459. Egypt once more had risen against Persia, and the temptation to open that great corn-market, and to substitute Athenian control for Persian, had been irresistible; for Athens, like England, lived by imported corn which she paid for with manufactured goods. Moreover, few parts of Greece were entirely independent of it, and if Athens could but lay her hands upon the three great granaries of the Hellenic world, the Black Sea, Egypt and Sicily, she would have gone a long way towards securing her domination over the rest of Hellas. But though she was thus weakened for the moment, Athens could still raise a sufficient force both by land and sea to deal with Corinth and Ægina; and fortunately Sparta, whom a Persian envoy, anxious to get the Athenians out of Egypt, tried to persuade to take a hand, was still occupied with the long blockade of Mount Ithomê. Battle was joined at sea near Ægina in 458, and Athens won a great victory, which she followed up by landing on the island and blockading the town. The Corinthians then invaded the Megarid, expecting that the Athenians would be compelled to raise the blockade. But the spirit of Athens was high, and she put into the field an army of those who were over and under the military age—old men and boys—and hurried it to the help of Megara. A first battle was indecisive, but in a second, twelve days later, the Corinthians suffered a severe defeat.

The blockade of Ægina lasted almost two years, and before it ended Sparta and Bœotia had intervened. In 457 a Peloponnesian army, escaping the notice of the Athenians at Pegæ, the northern port of Megara, had crossed the Gulf of Corinth and had re-established the power of Thebes over Bœotia. When it had done its

work and was ready to return, return was no longer possible. The Athenians were on the watch at Pegæ, and the passes over Mount Geraneia in the Megarid were held in force. The Peloponnesians therefore were obliged to wait in Bœotia, and as they had friends in Athens who were plotting against the democracy, they advanced to Tanagra, near the Athenian frontier, in order to get into touch with them.

Party feeling at the time was running high in Athens. The oligarchical party, being in the main composed of those who owned or occupied land, was bitterly opposed to the policy pursued by the democracy under the brilliant leadership of Perikles, who from this time until his death in 429 really governed Athens. They were willing enough to fight Persia if need be, but not Sparta, for they were attached to the Spartan connection, and they wanted peace at home. They disliked intensely the building of the Long Walls by which Perikles, following the policy of Themistokles, was joining Athens to Peiræus, for those walls meant that Perikles and his party expected Attica to be invaded by the Peloponnesians, and, if it were, their farms and orchards would certainly be ruined. Peiræus too was full of sailors and artisans, sturdy democrats who thought only of commerce and foreign trade, and who, so long as a large fleet kept the sea-ways safe, cared little what happened to the farms of Attica. And were there not too many democrats in Athens already without adding the whole of the Peiræus? The oligarch, be it remembered, was as a rule an honest patriot—as honest as any Greek party man could be, for the Greek “was far more attached to party than to state,” and was always too ready to plunge into revolution if the state adopted a policy which conflicted with his party interests, a position into which modern states may possibly be drifting. Browning, through the lips

of Aristophanes, has put the oligarch's view of things before us. He was the—

Patriot, loving peace and hating war,—
Choosing the rule of few, but wise and good,
Rather than mob-dictature, fools and knaves
However multiplied their mastery,—
Despising most of all the demagogue.

I loathing—beyond less puissant speech
Than my own god-grand language to declare—
The fawning, cozenage and calumny
Wherewith such favourite feeds the populace
That fan and set him flying for reward:—
I, loving, hating, wishful from my soul
That truth should triumph, falsehood have defeat.

Aristophanes' Apology.

Moreover, by the time of Aristophanes, the oligarch (who was the taxpayer) was paying more than he liked, to provide employment and amusement for those who could not find work, or could not live by it—a step, that has always been fatal in the history of states. Neither party, however, then any more than now, had a monopoly of honest intention, or of wisdom. Circumstances change: moods and conditions vary: it is not always the same doctor or the same teacher that we need.

With revolution in the air at home, and a Peloponnesian army just across the border, the position was full of danger, and Perikles decided to fight at once. He appealed for help to Argos and Thessaly, who sent contingents, and Athens, sorely weakened by the Egyptian expedition, put every man she could raise into the field. There was a hard fight at Tanagra, but in the heat of the battle the Thessalians went over to the enemy, and the Athenians were defeated. The Peloponnesian victory, however, was not sufficiently decisive to enable them to march on Athens, and they were glad enough to seize the opportunity, which their

victory secured them, of retiring through the Isthmus unopposed. And there was relief at Athens, for the democracy and the Long Walls were safe.

Kimon's friends had shown at Tanagra that he and they at any rate were no traitors. They fought and died where they stood to prove their patriotism and his. He had presented himself, and had asked to be admitted to the ranks, when the army crossed the frontier, but had been refused. After the battle, however, admiration for his patriotism and for the heroism of his friends led to his recall to Athens; and two months later, in the absence of the Peloponnesians, another Athenian army marched into Bœotia, and at Œnophyta, not far from Tanagra, won a decisive victory which laid the whole country at their feet. In the following year, 456, Ægina submitted, and was obliged to surrender her fleet and destroy her walls. Athens now was at the height of her power. At sea she had no rival, and by land Sparta could not touch her. In 454, however, she suffered a ruinous defeat in Egypt, and very few of the ships or men engaged there ever returned. The effects of the disaster were far-reaching both at home and abroad. Exhaustion, and some fear lest Persia should become dangerous, made peace with Sparta necessary, and by the good offices of Kimon a five years' truce was arranged between Athens and the Peloponnesians. But it cost her the Argive alliance, and Argos, left unprotected, was glad to find Sparta willing to arrange with her a peace for thirty years.

In 449 a large fleet was sent under the command of Kimon to Cyprus. Siege was laid to Kition on the south coast, but it was stubbornly defended by its Phœnician prince. The fleet ran short of food: then Kimon died, and finally a Phœnician fleet appeared and it was necessary to abandon the siege and put to

sea to meet it. The battle was fought off Salamis in Cyprus, and ended in a complete victory for the Athenians, which they followed up by landing and defeating the army which, as at Mykalé and the Eurymedon, was present to support the fleet. This was the last engagement in the long Persian war, and in the following year a peace was arranged, which left Egypt and Cyprus to Persia, and, on the other hand, secured the freedom of Ionia and barred the Ægean to Persian ships of war.

But the troubles of Athens were not ended by the five years' truce. There were disturbances at Miletus about 450. The oligarchical party, which the Athenians had left in power, broke away from the confederacy and sought help from Persia; so the popular party appealed to the Athenians, who at once intervened, changed the government, and left a garrison. There were similar disturbances at Erythræ and Kolophon, and similar measures were taken in both places. These towns were confederates on equal terms no more. The rest of the confederacy, however, showed no sign of discontent.

But worse was to come. The Egyptian disaster had weakened Athens, and within a short space the land empire built up by Perikles to protect Attica against invasion collapsed, and left her fatally exposed. The Athenian ascendancy in Bœotia had been maintained through the democratic governments which had been put in power. The oligarchical leaders had gone into exile with hatred in their hearts, intent upon revenge. Unfortunately the democracy was inexperienced and disorderly, and things began to go wrong. It was not long before the exiles reappeared, and joining forces regained the mastery of several towns. A small Athenian force was hastily gathered, and marched off against them in opposition to the advice of Perikles, who urged

more careful preparation and a larger force. It was defeated near Koronea in 447, with a heavy loss in prisoners, among whom were members of the best families in Athens. As usual in Greek warfare after a disaster of this kind, the one thought was to recover the prisoners. No price was too high to pay. Had they all fallen on the field of battle, another army could have been raised, and another blow struck for empire. But while they were alive and in the hands of her enemies Athens could do nothing. The price of their restoration was the evacuation of Bœotia. She paid it, and thenceforward her frontier on the north was Kithæron instead of Thermopylæ.

And the oligarchical parties were busy in other places, too. The great island of Eubœa was next stirred to revolt, and as soon as Perikles had crossed with fleet and army to recover it, there fell the worst blow of all, for ungrateful Megara, under the same prompting, revolted too, and the barrier between Athens and the Peloponnese was shattered. The road over Geraneia lay open, and a Spartan force under the young King Pleistoanax marched into Attica, and laid waste the country as far as Eleusis. Perikles came back from Eubœa to meet him, and then suddenly, without apparent reason, Pleistoanax withdrew his army. The Spartans accused him of taking a bribe, and he fled for his life to a temple in Arcadia, where he lived in sanctuary for many years. As soon as the danger was over Perikles returned with a large force to Eubœa, and quickly reconquered the island. Another ally had been transformed into a subject. Even Athens herself could no longer affect to disguise the fact that she had become a "tyrant city."

The five years' truce had not availed to prevent the invasion of Pleistoanax, and it was now running out. Despondency reigned at Athens. She had not yet

steeled herself to endure the frequent, prolonged and destructive invasions which war with Sparta must entail, now that the desertion of Megara had exposed her frontier. She must have peace. It was vain to dream of a land empire: henceforth she must give her whole attention to the maintenance and expansion of her dominions overseas. Land and property were no longer secure in Attica beyond the walls that girdled Athens and Peiræus, but the islands, shielded by the fleet, no Spartan force could touch. For on the sea, as Perikles reminded the Athenians a few years later, and no doubt reminded them now also, they were supreme. "Such are your naval resources," he said, "that your vessels may go where they please, without the King of Persia or any other nation on earth being able to stop them"—[Thucydides, ii. 62]. And in time of war no enemy ships were safe upon the sea: their foreign trade was interrupted and strangled as effectively as that of Germany by our fleets in the Great War. Megara was to learn what sea-power meant.

But at this time the threat to her farms and vineyards and orchards touched Athens too nearly. So a Thirty Years' Peace was concluded early in 445, and Athens gave up the two ports of Megara, which she still occupied, and all other territory that she held within the Peloponnese. Each party was pledged not to admit cities belonging to the other league as members of its own without permission, and all differences arising between them in the future were to be settled by arbitration—a pious resolution that, alas, went, like so many others, unfulfilled. Will a League of Nations at a crisis have better fortune? Not much more was to be heard of arbitration as a method of settling the disputes of sovereign states for two thousand years to come, and more.

Now for a time Perikles was free to concentrate his

attention upon domestic problems. Unemployment, then as now, was one of them. The rise in the number of the unemployed was due apparently in part to the increasing use of slave labour: and service with the fleet no longer as in the days of Themistokles found employment for all the poorer citizens. Another task that awaited attention was the restoration of the temples destroyed by the Persians—a religious duty long postponed. Perikles was resolved by the adornment of his queen of cities to make her the wonder, if he could not make her the mistress, of the Hellenic world; and that would find work for thousands of his unemployed, while the foundation of colonies would provide new homes for other thousands, and new markets for the manufactured goods of Athens. So he would make useful citizens of some at any rate of that idle, discontented and meddling crowd of people, who were a great embarrassment to the city and to him, as, poor souls, they always are.

But public works cost money, and temples, when built, are not like canals, or harbours, or reclaimed or irrigated lands; for temples create no wealth, though these, as the tradesman would say, would be good for business. Would they not bring visitors to worship and to admire? And visitors spend money. On what funds was Perikles to draw for his vast capital expenditure? Much was found by taxation, but more came from that treasury of the Confederacy of Delos, which was removed to Athens in 454. Athens was spending lavishly in other directions also at the bidding of Perikles, for he was resolved to make his administration popular (only so could he obtain the annual re-election on which his power depended), and to enable the poorest citizen to do his part in public work. Already the jurymen were paid their three obols a day (4½*d.*) to take their turn in hearing and deciding

cases—and a single jury was no bare dozen men, but hundreds; six thousand did the duty each year, and took the pay when serving. A larger number found steady employment in the fleet. And there were free seats for the theatre, and splendid shows for their entertainment. The citizen, in one way or another, was largely living at the public cost. Would the oligarchical party do as much for the people? Of course not; then we vote for Perikles! He, it happened, was a statesman, and a master-mind, and Thucydides tells us that “what was nominally a democracy became in his hands government by the first citizen,” but those who came after him and inherited his methods were mere politicians, second-rate men such as so commonly come to the top in politics. Disaster can only follow when politicians bid for power by bribing the democracy. As for the Athenians, Plutarch recorded¹ that they were “changed from a sober, thrifty people, that maintained themselves by their own labours, to lovers of expense, intemperance and licence.” The fourth century B.C. was already complaining of the idle habits which had resulted from a system which bore a disquieting resemblance to our own system of unemployment pay.

Much of the money that Perikles was lavishing upon Athens the oligarchical party and their leader contended should never have been used for such purposes at all. It belonged to the Confederacy. That with them was a point of principle; but they had another strong motive for opposing his present use of the fund, for it was the secret of his power. Expeditions against Persia had ceased with the death of Kimon, and the accumulations were enormous. The oligarchical party was still strong, and it pressed its view that Athens held this money as a trustee for the purpose of defence

¹ About A.D. 45 to 120.

against Persia, and had no right to spend it on building temples and the like for her own greater glory. "Greece," said they, "cannot but resent it as an insufferable affront, and consider herself to be tyrannised over openly, when she sees the treasure, which was contributed by her upon a necessity for war, wantonly lavished out by us upon our city, to gild her all over, and to adorn and set her forth, as it were some vain woman, hung around with precious stones and figures and temples, which cost a world of money"—[Plutarch, *Perikles* (Clough)]. Some would even have had her dissolve the Confederacy, and refund the tribute, when peace was made with Persia, for Athens had her "Little Athenians," as we our "Little Englishers"—honest, impracticable people, often the very salt of the earth and earliest pioneers of ultimate progress, but a trial to any conceivable government in a democratic country because they always run counter to the accepted policy, and would rather be martyrs than conform. Very impracticable must these "Little Athenians" have seemed to needy citizens on the verge of destitution, and dependent on state pay for their daily bread. Where would they be if the tribute ceased?

Perikles of course would not admit that what he did was wrong. "The money is not theirs that give it," he said, "but theirs that receive it, if so be they perform the conditions upon which they receive it." Athens had undertaken to protect her allies against the Persian: she had done it, and would continue to do it, and she owed no account to anybody for her expenditure of the surplus funds. We shall probably feel that the better reason was with his oligarchical opponents. It was wrong of Athens to spend the money on temples of marble, and colossal statues of ivory and gold; and yet—and yet—"the world is still blessing her

for what she did with it"—[Zimmern, *Greek Commonwealth*, p. 192]. The oligarchical party might question the morality of such expenditure, and Plutarch in his generation may regret that Athens should have spent more upon the production of the great tragedies, that year by year were played before the people, than upon all her wars; but for its fruit we have the immortal plays of Æschylus, Sophocles and Euripides; and we have the Parthenon, the great temple of the Maiden Athene on the Acropolis, "perhaps the only building in the history of architecture which is intellectually perfect in design and technically perfect in execution," and the glorious frieze¹ with which Pheidias adorned its inner walls—monuments, these, of artistic genius which remain unrivalled to this day. "The Art of the age of Perikles is the fountain-head to which artists still return"; and it is still true to say, as Plutarch said so many centuries ago in his *Life of Perikles*, "There is a sort of bloom of youth upon those works of his, preserving them from the touch of time, as if they had some perennial spirit and undying vitality mingled in the composition of them."

People sometimes talk and write as though the glories of Athens were bought at the price of the pain and misery and degradation of the slave—as though Athenian democracy could not have existed if that price had not been paid. Slaves there were, but in Athens they were not necessarily degraded: nor, except in the dreaded silver mines at Laureion, where the dangerous and the sullen and the stupid toiled, were they detailed for work that the free Athenian would not do. "The slaves at Athens were so well treated, had become so integral a part of the life of the city, that they were indistinguishable in appearance from the citizens. Moreover, although we have always been

¹ The Elgin Marbles of to-day.

taught that a slave is a thing, and a thing cannot possess another thing, the slaves at Athens were sometimes rich enough 'to indulge in luxury,' or 'to give away their own moneys' in order to save their skins. And the reason why slaves have to be well treated and to be allowed to become rich is not humanitarian but economic: it is because Athens needs wealth, and the slaves are wealth-producers, and will not produce wealth unless they are well treated"—[Zimmern, *Greek Commonwealth*, p. 385]. These men worked side by side with free Athenians, and were treated like them, and as a sad result of the operation of an inexorable economic law (which had not then been recognised) the free were ultimately impoverished and ousted by their cheaper labour, and swelled the number of unemployed and discontented citizens, who listened too eagerly to windy demagogues. The competition of cheap labour on the Continent, working for longer hours at lower wages, has had precisely the same effect in England since the war.

Many of the slaves were skilled craftsmen, artists, tutors, confidential secretaries: they could take pride and pleasure in their work, and they had always good hope that they would achieve freedom. They could buy it out of their earnings, and not infrequently they received it as a gift—a gift, it might be, from the enemy who had defeated and enslaved them. Did not the Syracusans give liberty to many an enslaved Athenian soldier who could recite them lines from Euripides' great plays?

Any such happy man had prompt reward:
If he lay bleeding on the battlefield,
They staunch his wounds and gave him drink and food;
If he were slave i' the house, for reverence
They rose up, bowed to who proved master now,
And bade him go free, thank Euripides!

BROWNING, *Balaustion's Adventure*.

And we must not suppose that every family that to-day has the help of kindly servants in the house would in Athens have had slaves. It was far otherwise. "In an average Greek city the proportion of families which kept household slaves was probably not large"—[Zimmern, *Greek Commonwealth*, p. 275, n.] Those who did commonly made friends of them. There is no more delightful figure in Homer or Greek Tragedy than the affectionate and honoured nurse. And the man-servant, too, can say of his dead mistress Alcestis in Euripides' play, "I loved her like my mother. So did all the slaves."

The Greek could hardly be a brutal master. He could never quite forget that Fate might have slavery in store one day for him. It was a fate that had befallen too many. And it was not every slave who had the good fortune of Plato the philosopher, or of Demokedes of Kroton in the south of Italy, of whom Herodotus has one of his delightful tales to tell. Demokedes, the most skilful doctor of his time, was practising in Samos at the court of Polykrates, when that tyrant was put to death by the Persian governor Orætes, and was enslaved by him with many others. Orætes later incurred the displeasure of Darius, and when he in turn was put to death, his slaves and other property were sent up to Susa.

Not long after this, it happened that Darius, while hunting, twisted his foot in dismounting from his horse, so violently that the ball of the ankle joint was dislocated from its socket. Darius called in the first physicians of Egypt, whom he had till now kept near his person; who, by their forcible wrenching of the foot, did but make the hurt worse; and for seven days and nights the king could get no sleep for the pain. On the eighth day he was in very evil case; then someone, who had heard in Sardis of the skill of Demokedes of Kroton, told the king of him. Darius bade Demokedes be brought to him without delay. Finding the physician somewhere all unregarded and forgotten among Orætes' slaves, they brought him into view,

dragging his chains and clad in rags. . . . Darius then entrusting the matter to him, Demokedes applied Greek remedies and used gentleness instead of the Egyptians' violence; whereby he made the king able to sleep and in a little while recovered him of his hurt, though Darius had had no hope of regaining the use of his foot. After this, Darius rewarded him with a gift of two pairs of golden fetters. "Is it then your purpose," Demokedes asked, "to double my pains for my making you whole?" Darius, pleased by his wit, sent him to the king's wives. The eunuchs brought him to the women, saying, "This is he who saved the king's life"; whereupon each of them took a vessel and, scooping with it from a chest full of gold, so richly rewarded the physician that the servant, whose name was Skiton, collected a very great sum of gold by following and gleaning the staters that fell from the vessels.

HERODOTUS, iii. 129-30 (Godley).

Even so Demokedes was not yet free, though his servitude was gilded. He did, however, later contrive his escape and return to Kroton, but that is another story.

If a Greek master were a brute and knocked his slaves about, the law would deal with him: the slave there had equal protection with the free. Yet the law at times had to take notice of the difference in status. "Food shall not be sold here: punishment—for a citizen a fine of 5 drachmæ, for a slave a beating," runs a notice found upon a wall. At best slavery is a sad lot. "Zeus," says Homer, "takes away half his worth from a man, when the day of slavery comes upon him"—[*Odyssey*, xvii. 322]. But what would Homer have said of some lives that are lived in our great industrial cities of to-day?

The oligarchical party was well organised for its trial of strength with Perikles over the question of his use of the funds of the Confederacy. Formerly the members of the party had sat where they pleased in the assembly, one here, another there; but Thu-

cydides,¹ the son of Melesias, who had led it since the death of Kimon, made his followers sit together and act together in the fashion of the parties in our parliament to-day. He needed all the help that organisation could give him against the magic power of the great democratic leader's golden speech. "When I have thrown him and given him a fair fall," he said, using a metaphor from wrestling, "by persisting that he had no fall, he gets the better of me, and makes the bystanders, in spite of their own eyes, believe him"—[Plutarch, *Perikles* (Clough)]. Thucydides fancied that public opinion was on his side. Perhaps he might be able at last to give Perikles a fall that he could not disguise. The machinery of ostracism enabled Athens to hold from time to time what we should call a referendum, and Thucydides now set it in motion, confidently expecting that the vote would send Perikles to banishment. But his expectation was disappointed, and it was he who in 442 passed into banishment, leaving Perikles the undisputed master of the city for the next fifteen years.

Two famous colonies were founded about this time. One was Thurii, which was established in 443 on the Gulf of Tarentum in Italy. It was laid out, as also was Peiræus, in rectangular blocks like a modern American city, with due regard for convenience and health. It was to be a model city, which should show all Hellas what Perikles would have a city be. Athens itself was no model. "Her streets were narrow and crooked, dirty, unlighted and ill-paved. She had no sewers, or even cesspools, and over the whole department of sanitation it is best to draw a veil"—[Zimmern, *Greek Commonwealth*, p. 295]. In Thurii mind should be cared for as well as body. Education was compulsory

¹ Not to be confused with Thucydides, the son of Olorus, the historian.

and free. Those still living can remember a time when in England town-planning was unknown, and when education was neither compulsory nor free. And Thurii was not to be exclusively an Athenian city. Greeks of all races were to be taught there to live in amity together, as they never had lived yet. This city of ideals attracted a number of distinguished Greeks, and among them Herodotus, who left Athens, the home, so far as he had one, of his middle years, and for the last fifteen or twenty years of his life, no doubt with intervals of travel, lived at Thurii.

The other colony was founded in 436 in a position of great strategical importance. There was a town known as Ennea Hodoi, or The Nine Ways, where the river Strymon leaves Lake Kerkinitis. At that point a bridge spanned the river, and roads converged upon it from all points of the compass. Histiaëus had tried to establish himself there, and a generation later, in 465, Athens had sent out 10,000 men to colonise it, but without success, for the warlike tribes of the neighbourhood fell upon them and destroyed them. But the site had an irresistible attraction for Athens. If she held it, no enemy could pass by land from the south to Sestos or Byzantium to obstruct the regular passage of the ships that bore her corn supply from the shores of the Black Sea. Once more a strong force was sent out to seize the position. It landed at Eion at the mouth of the Strymon some four or five miles away, which Kimon had conquered, and forcing its way up the river occupied the town, which henceforth was known as Amphipolis. But Athens had little profit of it. Within fifteen years of its foundation it revolted from her, and admitted the Spartans, and all efforts to recover it were unsuccessful.

Between the foundation of Thurii and the foundation of Amphipolis Athens had to meet another formidable

revolt against her power. In 440 trouble arose between Samos, the most powerful of her allies, and Miletus. The latter being worsted appealed to Athens. Athens required both parties to submit to her award, and when the Samians refused to do so she sent a fleet to enforce obedience. Leaders of the oligarchical party, who had withdrawn to the mainland, procured help from the Persian governor of Sardis, and, returning unexpectedly, raised their party, captured the Athenian garrison, and broke into open revolt. Byzantium, so important, but Byzantium only, did the same. A fleet of sixty triremes was dispatched at once against Samos under Perikles, with whom were the nine other generals of the year, among them the poet Sophokles, who had been chosen by the people with a dangerous inconsequence (so democracies at times will choose) because he had recently charmed them with his great *Antigone*:

"Since (we argued) whoso penned that piece
Might just as well conduct a squadron—straight
Good-naturedly he took on him command,
Got laughed at, and went back to making plays,
Having allowed us our experiment
Respecting the fit use of faculty."

BROWNING, *Aristophanes' Apology*.

Such experiments do not always end so harmlessly.

The harbour of Samos was blockaded, and upon the landward side, to cut it off from all possibility of provisioning or relief, the town was surrounded by a triple wall. Such was the usual practice where a prolonged siege was expected, and reduction by the slow process of starvation was resorted to. A walled city could rarely be taken in any other way by Greek hoplites—unless, as so often happened, the ravaging of its crops and vineyards brought out its army and provoked the quick issue of a battle.

A Phœnician fleet was expected, and the Athenians were embarrassed by the necessity of detaching a

squadron to intercept it; but it never came, and the Samians were starved into surrender after a blockade of nine months. The terms were severe: they were compelled to destroy their fortifications, to surrender their fleet, to give hostages, and to pay a heavy war indemnity. As usual a democratic government was put in power. Byzantium at the same time made submission. Again none of the other allies attempted to revolt, although the opportunity was so favourable. The fleets of Chios and Lesbos helped Athens, and the treasury, filled by the contributions of the Confederacy, paid the costs. It is plain that the rule of Athens was not generally hated yet.

Samos had appealed not only to Persia, but also to Sparta and her allies, who met in conference to consider and decide what should be done. Many voted, in spite of the Peace, for helping Samos (and such help would have been disastrous to Athens), but the Corinthians, who for years had been such bitter enemies of the Athenians, were now happily the advocates of peace, and their arguments prevailed. They probably did not want Athens to lose Byzantium and the Black Sea trade, for if she did she must turn to Sicily for corn, and Sicily was their own preserve. They pointed out that by the terms of the Thirty Years' Peace each party had the right to punish its own defaulting members. The principle was sound. No doubt they reflected that Megara might turn again to Athens, or that one of their own colonies might defy them. A few years later they were at odds with Corcyra, a powerful colony of their own, though not a member of the Peloponnesian league, and they expected Athens to stand correctly neutral. But Athens was tempted. Corcyra held the key to Sicily and the West. What an opportunity to make sure of it! At all costs Corinth must be prevented from laying hands

upon it. War, it is true, would be the price, but not too high a price, or so she thought. She was in a gambling mood and took the risk, which in 445 she would not face—supremacy or downfall. Did not the Germans do the same?

The reconquest of Samos was celebrated in customary fashion by a solemn funeral ceremony in honour of the fallen, and by a funeral speech, which Perikles was chosen to deliver. With such feelings and in such words as our Great War taught us, he paid homage to the immortality of those who laid down their lives for their country—young lives so full of promise, so precious in their homes, so precious to the city, which, bereft of the joy and promise of their presence, mourned them like a mother. By their death, he said in a beautiful phrase, "the spring had been taken out of the year." His words so moved his audience that the women crowned him with garlands like a victorious athlete. But there was one present, Elpinike, the aged sister of Kimon, who could take no satisfaction in a victory won over Greeks. With grave irony she now addressed him "'These,' she said, 'are brave deeds, Perikles, that you have done, and such as deserve our chaplets; who have lost us many a worthy citizen, not in a war with Phœnicians or Medes, like my brother Kimon, but for the overthrow of an allied and kindred city.' As Elpinike spoke these words, he, smiling quietly, as it is said, returned her answer with this verse:

'Old women should not seek to be perfumed'—

[Plutarch, *Perikles* (Clough)].

Supremacy or downfall? The balance was precarious: it must ere long descend on one side or the other. Events now led on rapidly to the Peloponnesian War which was to bring the fated end.

INDEX

INDEX

A

ABYDOS, 122
 Achæans, 12 f., 17, 21, 27
 Acropolis, 126, 148, 179, 203
 Adeimantus, 149 f.
 Ægina, 123, 175, 192 f., 196
 Æschylus, 98, 153, 158, 167
 Agamemnon, 21 f.
 Alexander the Great, 43, 168
 Alkmeonidæ, 115 f.
 All Souls' Day, 51
 Alphabet, 40, 43
 Alyattes, 90
 America, 39, 44, 49, 51, 54 f.,
 66
 Amos, 63
 Amphipolis, 184 n., 208
 Aphetæ, 139, 150
 Apollo, 57 f., 68 f.
 Arabian Nights, 122
 Argos, 129, 186, 192, 195 f.
 Aristagoras, 102 ff.
 Aristarchus, 47
 Aristides, 123, 152, 158, 177,
 181 f.
 Aristogeiton, 87
 Aristophanes, 56, 192, 195
 Aristotle, 81, 135
 Arnold, 42
 Artabazus, 167
 Artaphernes, 110

Artaxerxes, 187 f.
 Artemisia, 155 ff.
 Artemisium, 138 ff., 149
 Arthur, 13
 Asopus, 163, 167
 Assyria, 37 f., 61, 90
 Astronomy, 47
 Astyages, 91
 Athens, 9, 53 f., 75, 82 ff.,
 108 ff., *et passim*
 Athos, 108, 110, 120
 Atossa, 153

B

Babylon, 37 f., 61, 90
 Balkans, 12, 24, 100
 Bible, 46, 92
 Black Sea, 58, 61, 86, 101,
 179
 Bœotia, 162, 190, 193 f., 196 ff.
 Boges, 185
 Bolsheviks, 182
 Bosphorus, 19, 179
 Browning, 46, 78, 112, 194,
 204
 Bulis, 109
 Bull, 9, 24
 Bull-baiting, 11
 Byron, 117
 Byzantium, 102, 179 f., 208 ff.

C

Cadiz, 58
 Canada, 58
 Carthaginians, 58
 Chalkidiké, 184
 Coinage, 61 f.
 Communism, 52, 85
 Constantinople, 179
 Copernicus, 47
 Corcyra, 210
 Corinth, 73, 175, 192, 210
 Corinth, Gulf of, 192
 Corn, 43, 58, 86, 193, 208
 Crete, Chap. I., 40
 Crimea, 39
 Cræsus, 69, 88, 91, 94 ff.
 Custom, 48, 52, 65 f.
 Cyrus, 69, 89, 91, 94 ff.

D

Dædalus, 7
 Danes, 129
 Danube, 100 f.
 Dardanelles, 2, 21, 24, 180
 Darius, 97, 100, 119, 167, 205
 Darwin, 47
 Datis, 110
 David, 38
 Debt-slaves, 63, 79 f.
 Declaration of Indulgence, 81
 Delos, Confederacy of, 182 f., 200 ff.
 Delphi, 57, 68 f., 94, 125
 Demagogues, 70
 Demaratus, 100, 127 ff., 142, 155
 Democracy, 55, 194 f., 201
 Demokedes, 205, f.

Demosthenes, 64
 Dionysius of Phokæa, 105 f.
 Dorians, 27, 29, 39, 129, 175
 Doriskus, 128, 185
 Double Axe, 5
 Drake, 14
 Drako, 79

E

Egypt, 6 ff., 19 ff., 43 ff., 61, 71, 119, 186, 193, 196
 Eion, 184 f., 208
 Elgin Marbles, 203
 Elpinike, 211
 England, 29, 193, 204
 Ennea Hodoi, 208
 Ephesus, 91, 105
 Ephialtes, 143 ff.
 Eretria, 104 f., 108, 110
 Eubœa, 104, 110, 138, 198
 Eumæus, 40
 Euripides, 49, 51, 59, 80 f., 204
 Euripus, 137, 139
 Eurybiades, 138, 149 ff.
 Eurymedon, 188 f.
 Ezekiel, 37

F

Frazer, 117

G

Galileo, 47
 Gallipoli, 101
 Genesis, 36, 47
 Geometry, 43
 Geraneia, 194, 198

Germans, 16, 18, 62, 199, 211
 Gyges, 61, 88

H

Halikarnassus, 92, 155
 Halys, 90
 Harmodius, 87
 Hecatæus, 92
 Hegesistratus, 169
 Hellenes, 17
 Hellespont, 19, 25, 86, 120, 171, 184
 Helots, 129, 133 f., 162, 189
 Hera, 9
 Herodotus, 29, 50, 55 f., 67, 71, 74, 92 ff., 208
 Hesiod, 2, 19, 29, 32, 66
 Hill, The, 84
 Hipparchus, 87
 Hippias, 87, 111
 Histiaëus, 101 f., 208
 Hittites, 38
 Hollows of Eubœa, 139
 Homer, 9, 12, 18, 20, 29, 34
 Hoplitæ, 58
 Huxley, 47
 Hydarnes, 109, 143

I

Immortals, The, 143
 India, 77 f., 89, 121
 Ionians, 17, 36 f., 55, 140 f., 153, 157, 168, 171, 175, 181
 Ionian Revolt, Chap. VII.
 Ireland, 6
 Iron, 6
 Israel, 63, 69

Isthmus of Corinth, 126, 137 f., 141, 147 f., 192
 Ithomê, 189, 193

J

James II., 81
 Jews, 45, 51, 90
 Jerusalem, 38, 90
 Johnson, Dr., 174
 Jury, 81, 200 f.

K

Kallimachus, 113
 Kambyases, 97
 Keats, 35
 Keftiu, 7
 Kimmerians, 39, 100
 Kimon, 181, 184, 188 ff., 196, 211
 Kithæron, 163 ff., 198
 Kleomenes, 102 ff., 127
 Kleon, 74
 Knossus, 2 ff., 13, 18
 Koronea, 198
 Kyaxares, 90
 Kythera, 127

L

Labrys, 5
 Labyrinthus, 5
 Lade, 105
 Lærtæ, 27
 Laureion, 84 f., 123, 203
 League of Nations, 89, 199
 Leonidas, 126, 138, 141 ff.
 Leotychides, 168 ff., 181

Litany, 52
 Lydians, 39, 61, 88 ff.
 Lycurgus, 79, 132

M

Macaulay, 174
 Macedonia, 101, 108
 Magna Carta, 72
 Marathon, 87, 93, Chap. VIII.
 Mardonius, 108, 110, 159 ff.
 Marseilles, 58, 97
 Masistius, 163 f.
 Maskames, 185
 Mathematics, 44
Mayflower, 39
 Maypole, 9
 Medes, 90
 Megabazus, 101, 108
 Megara, 86, 164 f., 192 f., 198 f.
 Messenians, 129, 189
 Midas, 38
 Middle Ages, 172
 Miletus, 58, 61, 74 f., 91, 96,
 105 f., 110, 168, 197
 Miltiades, 101, 113 ff., 117 f.
 Miners, 84
 Minos, 10 ff.
 Minotaur, 10, 13 ff.
 Monarchy, 55
 Murray, 29, 67
 Mycenæ, 21 ff., 129
 Mykale, 168

N

Napoleon, 56, 87
 Naupaktus, 192
 Nausikaa, 28

Naxos, 183, 185 f.
 Nebuchadnezzar, 37, 90
 Nelson, 58
 Nineveh, 37, 61, 90
 Nine Ways, 102, 208
 Nisæa, 192
 Normans, 12

O

Odysseus, 12, 15, 20, 27, 34
 Odyssey, 12, 15, 21, 40
 Œnophyta, 196
 Olive, 85 f.
 Oligarchy, 55, 194 f., 206 ff.
 Olympic Games, 138
 Ostracism, 123, 207

P

Parthenon, 203
 Pausanias, 163, 180 f., 186
 Pegæ, 192, 194
 Peiræus, 178 f., 194
 Peisistratus, 85, 100
 Pelasgi, 17
 Peloponnesian War, 86, 211
 Periander, 73
Persæ, 98 f., 105, 153, 158, 167
 Persia, 43, 69, 87, Chaps.
 VI.-XII., 197
 Phæacians, 14 f.
 Phaterum, 150, 155, 178
 Pheidias, 203
 Pheidippides, 111 ff., 116 f.
 Phokæa, 97, 105
 Phokians, 141, 143 f.
 Phœnicians, 40 ff., 58, 157, 168
 Phrygians, 24, 38, 61

Phrynichus, 107
 Pillars of Hercules, 58
 Pirates, 13, 21, 30, 40, 178
 Plain, The, 84
 Plataea, 163, 165 ff.
 Plato, 51, 93, 205
 Pleistoanax, 198
 Plutarch, 13, 76, 82, 202 f.
 Polykrates, 70, 205
 Prophets, 46, 69
 Psyttaleia, 151, 158
 Pythagoras, 47
 Pythius, 121

R

Rameses III., 19, 21
 Red Sea, 42
 Religion, 46 f., 50, 67
 Renaissance, 16
 Revolution, 56, 63, 67
 Rome, 3, 16, 23, 35, 63, 100
 Romulus, 13
 Russia, 16, 23, 33, 35, 52, 56,
 101

S

Salamis, 86, 123, 140, Chap.
 XI.
 Salonika, 85
 Samos, 71, 168 f., 209 ff.
 Sardis, 61, 105
 Saros, 91
 Saxons, 29, 33, 36, 129
 Sea-rovers, 29 ff.
 Seisachtheia, 79, 84
 Sestos, 179

Shelley, 87
 Shore, The, 84
 Sicily, 42, 192, 210
 Sikinnus, 151
 Skyros, 185
 Skythians, 100
 Slaves, 203 ff.
 Smyrna, 89
 Socrates, 54, 82
 Solon, 44, 66, 76 ff., 82 ff.
 Sophocles, 83, 208
 Soudan, 71
 Sparta, 86, 96, 102 ff., 109,
 111 f., 129 ff., 174, 189, 194,
 196
 Sperthias, 109
 Star Chamber, 70
 Stonehenge, 6
 Strymon, 101, 184, 208
 Susa, 102
 Syracuse, 204

T

Tarshish, 58
 Tanagra, 194 ff.
 Tempe, 137
 Tennyson, 45, 56, 78
 Thales, 90, 96
 Thasos, 183, 189
 Thebans, 141, 145 f., 167
 Thebes, 163, 190, 192
 Themistokles, 123 ff., Chap.
 XI., 175 ff., 186 ff.
 Theognis, 62
 Thermopylæ, 127, Chap. X.
 Theseus, 13
 Thespians, 141, 145 f.
 Thessaly, 137, 181, 195
 Thrace, 101, 184

Thrasybulus, 73, 75
 Thucydides, 13, 21, 33, 93,
 172 ff.
 Thurii, 207 f.
 Troy, 21, 24 ff., 49
 Turks, 37, 88
 Tyrants, Chap. V.
 Tyre, 37, 97

U

Unemployed, 195, 200

V

Voltaire, 50

W

Walls of Athens, 176 ff., 194
 Wasps, 192
 William the Conqueror, 172
 Wordsworth, 56, 92

X

Xanthippus, 123, 169
 Xerxes, 67, 109 f., 119 ff.,
 Chaps. X., XI., 180, 187

Z

Zeppelins, 116
 Zeus, 9, 11
 Zimmern, 59, 69, 80, 85, 134,
 136

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 LONDON, N.W.1.